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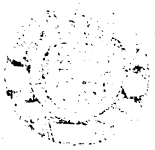

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The most Reverend
D^r. JOHN TILLOTSON
late Arch-Bishop of Canterbury.

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RB.23.a.35304

Several

DISCOURSES OF REPENTANCE.

viz.

The Neceſſity of Repentance and Faith.
Of confeſſing and forſaking Sin, in order to Pardon.
Of Confeſſion, and Sorrow for Sin.
The Unprofitableneſs of Sin in this Life, an Argument for Repentance.
The Shamefulneſs of Sin, an Argument for Repentance.
The final Iſſue of Sin, an Argument for Repentance.
The preſent and future Advantage of an Holy and Virtuous Life.
The Nature and Neceſſity of holy Reſolution.
The Nature and Neceſſity of Reſtitution.
The Uſefulneſs of Conſideration, in order to Repentance.
The Danger of Impenitence, where the Goſpel is preach'd.

By the Moſt Reverend
Dr. *JOHN TILLOTSON*,
Late Lord Arch-Biſhop of *Canterbury*.

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SERMON I.

The Neceſſity of Repentance and Faith.

Acts XX. 21.

Teſtifying both to the Jews, and alſo to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

TO have ſeen St. *Paul* in the Pulpit, was one of thoſe three things which St. *Auguſtine* thought worth the wiſhing for. And ſure it were very deſirable to have ſeen this glorious Inſtrument of God, who did ſuch wonders in the World, to have heard that plain and powerful Eloquence of his, which was ſo *mighty through God, for the caſting down of*

 ſtrong

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Vol. 8. *ſtrong holds, and the ſubduing of men to the obedience of the Goſpel*; to have beheld the zeal of this holy man, who was all on fire for God, with what ardency of affection, and earneſtneſs of expreſſion, he perſuaded men to come in to Chriſt, and entertain the Goſpel. This were very deſirable; but ſeeing it is a thing we cannot hope for, it ſhould be ſome ſatisfaction to our curioſity, to know what St. *Paul* preached, what was the main Subject of his Sermons, whither he refer'd all his Diſcourſes, and what they tended to. This he tells us in the words that I have read to you, that the main ſubſtance of all his Sermons was *repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

The Occaſion of the words was briefly this. St. *Paul* being in his Journy to *Jeruſalem*, and intending to be there by the day of *Pentecoſt*, that he might not be hindred in his Journy, he reſolves to paſs by *Epheſus*, and only to call to him the Elders of the Church to charge them with their duty, and the care of the Church; and to engage them hereto, he tells them how he

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he had carried and demeaned himself among them, *v.* 18. with what diligence and vigilance he had watched over them, with what affection and earneſtneſs he had preached to them, *v.* 19, 20. And here in the Text he tells them, what had been the ſum of his Doctrine, and the ſubſtance of thoſe many Sermons he had preached among them, and what was the End and Deſign of all his Diſcourſes, *viz.* To perſwade men to *repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; Teſtifying both to the Jews and Greeks,* &c. Serm. I.

I ſhall explain the words a little, and then fix upon the *Obſervations* which I intend to ſpeak to, becauſe I deſign this only as a Preface to ſome larger Diſcourſes of Faith and Repentance.

For explication. *Teſtifying*, the word is διαμαρτυρόμενος, which ſignifies to teſtifie, to prove a thing by teſtimony; ſo 'tis uſed, *Heb.* 2. 6. *But one in a certain place teſtifyeth, ſaying.* In heathen Writers the word is often uſed in a Law ſenſe, for conteſting by Law, and

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Vol. 8. pleading in a Cauſe; and from hence it ſignifies, earneſtly to contend or perſuade by arguments and threatnings. In the uſe of the LXX. it ſignifies to proteſt, to convince, to preſs earneſtly, to perſwade. It is uſed moſt frequently by St. *Luke* in a very intenſe ſignification, and is ſometimes joyned with Exhorting, which is an earneſt perſwading to a thing, *Acts* 2. 40. *And with many other words did he teſtifie and exhort, ſaying, ſave your ſelves from this untoward generation*; and with Preaching, *Acts* 8. 25. *And when they had teſtified and preached the word of the Lord*; and ſo *Acts* 18. 5. *Being preſſed in ſpirit, he teſtified to the Jews, that Jeſus was the Chriſt. Being preſſed in ſpirit*, ſignifies intention and vehemency in teſtifying to them, that he did vehemently endeavour to convince them; it ſeems to be equivalent to the expreſſion, *v.* 28. where it is ſaid, *Apollos did mightily convince the Jews that Jeſus was the Chriſt*; that is, did uſe ſuch Perſuaſions and Arguments as were ſufficient to convince; and to mention no more, *Acts* 28. 23. *He expounded and teſtified the Kingdom of God, perſwading them concerning Jeſus.*

St.

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St *Paul* in his Epistle to *Timothy* useth this word in a most vehement sense, for giving a solemn charge, 1 *Tim.* 5. 21. *I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ*, the word is διαμαρτύρομαι; and so 2 *Tim.* 2. 14. *charging them before the Lord, that they strive not about words*; and so 2 *Tim.* 4. 1. *I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ*; and here in the Text the word seems to be of a very high and intense signification because of the circumstances mentioned before and after; he tells us before, that he taught them at all seasons, *v.* 18. *publickly and from house to house*, *v.* 20. and afterwards at the 31. *v.* that *he warned them day and night with tears*; so that *testifying to the Jews Repentance and Faith*, must signifie his pressing and perswading of them with the greatest vehemency, to turn from their sins, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; his charging on them these things as their duty, his pleading with them the necessity of Faith and Repentance, and earnestly endeavouring to convince them thereof. Serm. 1.

Repentance toward God, and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ: What is

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Vol. 8. the Reaſon of this appropriation of *Repentance* and *Faith*, the one as properly reſpecting *God*, and the other *our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*? I anſwer. *Repentance* doth properly reſpect *God*, becauſe he is the party offended, and to whom we are to be reconciled; the *Faith* of the Goſpel doth properly refer to *the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, as the chief and principal Object of it; ſo that by *teſtifying to them repentance towards God*, &c. we are to underſtand that the Apoſtle did earneſtly preſs and perſwade them to repent of their ſins, whereby they had offended God, and to believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as *the Meſſias*, the perſon that was ordained of God, and ſent to be the Saviour of the world.

From the Words thus explained, this is the *Obſervation* that doth naturally ariſe,

That Repentance and Faith are the ſum and ſubſtance of the Goſpel; and that Miniſters ought with all earneſtneſs and vehemency to preſs people to repent and believe, to charge them with theſe, as their duty, and by all means

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means to endeavour to convince them of the neceſſity of them. Serm. 1.

In the handling of this, I ſhall do theſe *Two* things.

Firſt, Shew you what is included in *Repentance* and *Faith*, that you may ſee that they are the ſum of the Goſpel. And,

Secondly, Shew you the neceſſity of them.

Firſt, What is included in theſe.

I. *Repentance*; this properly ſignifies a change of mind, a conviction that we have done amiſs, ſo as to be truly ſorry for what we have done, and heartily to wiſh that we had not done it. To repent, is to alter our mind, to have other apprehenſions of things than we had, to look upon that now as evil, which we did not before; from whence follows ſorrow for what we have done, and a reſolution of mind for the future not to do again that which appears now to us to be ſo evil, that we are aſhamed of it, and troubled for it, and wiſh we

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had never done it. So that repentance implies a conviction that we have done ſomething that is evil and ſinful, contrary to the Law we are under, and thoſe Obligations of duty and gratitude that lie upon us, whereby God is highly provoked and incenſed againſt us, and we in danger of his wrath, and the ſad effects of his diſpleaſure; upon which we are troubled, and grieved, and aſhamed for what we have done, and wiſh we had been wiſer, and had done otherwiſe; hereupon we reſolve never to do any thing that is ſinful, that is contrary to our duty and obligations to God, and by which we may provoke him againſt us. Theſe *two* things are contained in a true repentance, a deep ſenſe of, and ſorrow for the evils that are paſt, and the ſins that we have committed; and a firm purpoſe and reſolution of obedience for the future, of abſtaining from all ſin, and doing what ever is our duty; the true effect of which Reſolution, is the breaking off the practice of ſin and the courſe of a wicked life, and a conſtant courſe of obedience.

II. *Faith*

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Serm. I.

II. *Faith in Christ* is an effectual believing the Revelation of the Gospel, the *History* and the *Doctrine* of it; the *History* of it, that there was such a person as Jesus Christ, that he was the true *Messias*, prophesied of and promised in the Old Testament, that he was born and lived and preached, and wrought the Miracles that are recorded, that he was crucified, and rose again, and ascended into Heaven, that he was *the Son of God*, and sent by him into the world, by his Doctrine to instruct, and by the Example of his life to go before us in the way to happiness, and by the Merit and Satisfaction of his death and sufferings, to appease and reconcile God to us, and to purchase for us the pardon of our sins and eternal life, upon the Conditions of Faith and Repentance and sincere Obedience; and that to enable us to the performance of these Conditions, he promised and afterward sent his holy Spirit, to accompany the preaching of his Gospel, and to assist all Christians to the doing of that which God requires of them; this is the *History* of the Gospel.

Now

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Now the *Doctrine* of it contains the Precepts and Promiſes and Threatnings of it, and Faith in Chriſt includes a firm belief of all theſe; of the Precepts of the Goſpel as the matter of our duty, and the Rule of our life; and of the Promiſes and Threatnings of the Goſpel, as arguments to our duty, to encourage our Obedience, and deter us from ſin. So that he that believes the Lord Jeſus, believes him to be the great Guide and Teacher ſent from God, to bring and conduct men to eternal happineſs, and that therefore we ought to hearken to him and follow him; this is to believe his *Prophetical* Office. He believes that he is *the Author of ſalvation*, and hath purchaſed for us forgiveneſs of ſins, ranſom from hell, and eternal life and bleſſedneſs upon the Conditions before mentioned, and therefore that we ought to rely upon him only for ſalvation, to own him for our Saviour, and to beg of him his holy Spirit, which he hath promiſed to us, to enable us to perform the Conditions required on our part; this is to believe his *Prieſtly* Office. And laſtly, He believes that the Precepts of the Goſpel, being

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being delivered to us by the Son of God, ought to have the authority of Laws upon us, and that we are bound to be obedient to them; and for our encouragement if we be so, that there is a glorious and eternal Reward promised to us; and for our terror if we be not, there are terrible and eternal Punishments threatned to us; to which Rewards, the Lord Jesus Christ at the day of Judgment, will sentence men, as the great Judge of the world; and this is to believe the *Kingly* Office of Christ. And this is the sum of that which is meant by *Faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ*, which the Apostle saith was one Subject of his preaching. Serm. I.

And the proper and genuine effect of this Faith, is to live as we believe, to conform our lives to the Doctrine, to the truth whereof we assent. Hence it is that true Christians, that is, those who fashioned their lives according to the Gospel, are call'd *believers*; and the whole of Christianity is many times contained in this word *believing*, which is the great Principle of a Christian life. As in the Old Testament all Religion

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Vol. 8. gion is expreſs'd by *the fear of God*; ſo in the New, by *Faith in Chriſt.*

And now you ſee what is included in *Repentance* and *Faith*, you may eaſily judge whether theſe be not the ſum of the Goſpel, that men would forſake their ſins and turn to God, and believe the revelation of the Goſpel concerning Jeſus Chriſt, that is, heartily entertain it and ſubmit to it. What did Chriſt preach to the *Jews*, but that they would repent of their ſins, and believe on him as the *Meſſias*? And what did the Apoſtles preach, but to the ſame purpoſe? When St. *Peter* preached to the Jews, *Acts* 2. the effect of his Sermon and the ſcope of it was to perſwade them *to repent and be baptized in the name of Jeſus*, that is, to profeſs their belief in him, *v.* 38. And ſo *Acts* 3. 19. This is the concluſion of his diſcourſe, *repent therefore and be converted*; and then he propounded Chriſt to them as the Object of their Faith, being *the great Prophet* that was Propheſied of by *Moſes*, who ſhould *be raiſed up among them*, *v.* 22. So likewiſe St. *Paul* when he preached to the Jews and Gentiles, theſe were his great Subjects,

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jects, *Acts* 17. 30. This is the concluſion of his Sermon to the *Athenians*, to perſwade them to repent, by the conſideration of a future Judgment; and to perſwade them to believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who was to be the Judge of the world, from the Miracle of his Reſurrection; *But now he commands all men every where to repent, becauſe he hath appointed a day*, &c. *whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead.* So that you ſee that theſe are the great Doctrines of the Goſpel, and were the ſum of the Apoſtles preaching; all their Sermons were perſwaſives to theſe two Duties of *Repentance* and *Faith.* Serm. 1.

Secondly, For the Neceſſity of theſe Doctrines. They are neceſſary for the eſcaping of eternal miſery, and attaining of everlaſting happineſs. And this will appear, by conſidering the Nature of them, and the Relation they have to both theſe.

For the avoiding of eternal puniſhment, 'tis neceſſary that guilt ſhould be removed, which is an obligation to puniſh-

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Vol. 8. puniſhment, and that cannot be but by pardon; and ſure we cannot imagine that God will ever pardon us without repentance; he will never remit to us the puniſhment of ſin, ſo long as we tell him we are not at all troubled for what we have done, and we are of the ſame mind ſtill, and will do the ſame again; and till we repent, we tell God this, and we may be ſure God will not caſt away his Pardons upon thoſe that deſpiſe them; ſo that Repentance is neceſſary to the eſcaping of Hell.

And Faith in Chriſt is neceſſary to it; for if this be the method of God's grace, not to pardon ſin without Satisfaction, and Jeſus Chriſt hath made Satisfaction for ſin by the merit of his Sufferings, and if it be neceſſary that we ſhould believe this, that the benefit hereof may redound to us; then Faith in Chriſt is neceſſary to the obtaining of the pardon of ſin, by which the guilt of ſin is removed, that is, our obligation to eternal puniſhment.

And then for attaining Salvation. Chriſt having in the Goſpel revealed to us the way and means to eternal happi-

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happineſs, it is neceſſary that we ſhould believe this Revelation of the Goſpel by Jeſus Chriſt, in order to this end. So that you ſee the neceſſity of Faith and Repentance, becauſe without theſe we can neither eſcape Miſery, nor attain to Happineſs.

I ſhould now come to draw ſome Inferences from this Diſcourſe, but I will firſt give ſatisfaction to a *Query* or two, to which this Diſcourſe ſeems to have given occaſion.

1. *Query.* You will ſay, why do I call *Repentance* a Doctrine of the Goſpel? It is a Doctrine of Nature. Natural Religion tells us, that when we have offended God, we ought to be ſorry for it, and reſolve to amend and reform.

Anſ. I do not make the Doctrine of Repentance proper to the Goſpel, as if it had not been revealed to the world before; but becauſe it is a Doctrine which the Goſpel very much preſſeth and perſwadeth men to, and becauſe the great Motives and Enforcements of it, are peculiar to the Goſpel.

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ſpel. So that the Doctrine of Repentance, conſidered with thoſe powerful Reaſons and Arguments to it, which the Goſpel furniſheth us withal, is in this ſenſe proper to the Goſpel, and not known to the world before.

There are *two* Motives and Enforcements to Repentance which the Goſpel furniſheth us with.

1. Aſſurance of Pardon and Remiſſion of ſins in caſe of repentance, which is a great encouragement to repentance, and which, before the Goſpel, the world had never any firm and clear aſſurance of.

2. Aſſurance of eternal Rewards and Puniſhments after this life, which is a ſtrong Argument to perſwade men to change their lives, that they may avoid the miſery that is threatned to impenitent ſinners, and be qualified for the Happineſs which it promiſeth to Repentance and Obedience. And this the Apoſtle tells us in the foremention-ed place, *Acts* 17. 30, 31. is that which doth as it were make Repentance to be a new Doctrine that did come

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come with the Gospel into the world, Serm. 1.
because it was never before enforced with this powerful Argument; *the times of that ignorance God winked at; but now he calls upon all men every where to repent; because*, &c. When the world was in *ignorance*, and had not such assurance of a future state, of eternal Rewards and Punishments after this life, the Arguments to Repentance were weak and feeble in comparison of what they now are, the necessity of this Duty was not so evident. But now God hath assur'd us of a future Judgment, now Exhortations to Repentance have a commanding power and influence upon men; so that *Repentance*, both as it is that which is very much prest and inculcated in the Gospel, and as it hath its chief Motives and Enforcements from the Gospel, may be said to be one of the great Doctrines of the Gospel.

Query 2. Whether the preaching of *Faith in Christ*, among those who are already Christians, be at all necessary? Because it seems very improper, to press those to believe in Christ, who are already perswaded that he is the *Messias*,

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Vol. 8. and do entertain the Hiſtory and Doctrine of the Goſpel.

Anſ. The *Faith* which the Apoſtle here means, and which he would perſwade men to, is an *effectual belief of the Goſpel*; ſuch a Faith as hath real effects upon men, and makes them to live as they believe; ſuch a Faith as perſwades them of the need of theſe Bleſſings that the Goſpel offers, and makes them to deſire to be partakers of them, and in order thereto to be willing to ſubmit to thoſe Terms and Conditions of Holineſs and Obedience, which the Goſpel requires. This is the *Faith* we would perſwade men to, and there is nothing more neceſſary to be preſt upon the greateſt part of Chriſtians than this; for how few are there among thoſe who profeſs to believe the Goſpel, who believe it in this effectual manner, ſo as to conform themſelves to it? The Faith which moſt Chriſtians pretend to, is meerly negative; they do not disbelieve the Goſpel, they do not conſider it, nor trouble themſelves about it, they do not care nor are concerned whether it be true or not; but they have not a poſitive

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positive belief of it, they are not possest with a firm persuasion of the truth of those matters which are contained in it; if they were, such a persuasion would produce real and positive effects. Every man naturally desires Happiness, and 'tis impossible that any man that is possest with this belief, that in order to Happiness it is necessary for him to do such and such things, and that if he omit or neglect them, he is unavoidably miserable, that he should not do them. Men *say* they believe this or that, but you may see in their lives, what it is they believe. So that the preaching of *this Faith in Christ*, which is the only true Faith, is still necessary. Serm. 1.

I. *Inference.* If *Repentance towards God*, and *Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*, be the sum and substance of the Gospel, then from hence we may infer the Excellency of the Christian Religion, which insists only upon these things which do tend to our Perfection and our Happiness. *Repentance* tends to our recovery, and the bringing of us back as near as may be to innocence. *Primus innocentiæ gradus est non peccasse*;

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Vol. 8. *secundus, penitentia*: and then *Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*, tho it be very comprehensive, and contains many things in it, yet nothing but what is eminently for our advantage, and doth very much conduce to our happiness. The *Historical* part of the Gospel acquaints us with the Person and Actions of our Saviour, which conduceth very much to our understanding of the Author and Means of our Salvation. The *Doctrinal* part of the Gospel contains what God requires on our part, and the Encouragements and Arguments to our Duty, from the consideration of the Recompence and Rewards of the next life. The *Precepts* of Christs Doctrine are such as tend exceedingly to the Perfection of our nature, being all founded in Reason, in the nature of God, and of a Reasonable Creature; I except only those positive Institutions of the Christian Religion, the two Sacraments, which are not burthensome, and are of excellent use. This is the *first*.

II. we may learn from hence what is to be the sum and end of our Preaching, to bring men to Repentance and

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a firm belief of the Gospel; but then it is to be considered, that we preach *Repentance*, so often as we preach either against sin in general, or any particular sin or vice; and so often as we perswade to holiness in general, or to the performance of any particular Duty of Religion, or to the exercise of any particular Grace; for Repentance includes the forsaking of sin, and a sincere resolution and endeavour of reformation and obedience. And we preach *Repentance* so often as we insist upon such Considerations and Arguments, as may be powerful to deter men from sin, and to engage them to holiness. And we preach *Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ*, so often as we declare the grounds of the Christian Religion, and insist upon such Arguments as tend to make it credible, and are proper to convince men of the Truth and Reasonableness of it; so often as we explain the Mystery of Christ's incarnation, the History of his Life, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, and Intercession, and the proper Ends and Use of these; so often as we open the Method of God's Grace for the salvation of sinners, the Nature of the Serm. I.

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Vol. 8. Covenant between God and us, and the Conditions of it, and the way how a ſinner is juſtified and hath his ſins pardoned, the Nature and Neceſſity of Regeneration and Sanctification; ſo often as we explain the Precepts of the Goſpel, and the Promiſes and Threatnings of it, and endeavour to convince men of the Equity of Chriſt's Commands, and to aſſure them of the Certainty of the Eternal Happineſs which the Goſpel promiſes to them that obey it, and of the Eternal Miſery which the Goſpel threatens to thoſe that are diſobedient; all this is preaching *Faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*.

III. This may correct the irregular humor and itch in many people, who are not contented with this plain and wholſom food, but muſt be gratified with ſublime Notions and unintelligible Myſteries, with pleaſant paſſages of Wit, and artificial ſtrains of Rhetorick, with nice and unprofitable Diſputes, with bold interpretations of dark Prophecies, and peremptory Determinations of what will happen next year, and a punctual ſtating of the time when

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when *Anti-Christ* shall be thrown down, and *Babylon* shall fall, and who shall be employed in this Work. Or if their humor lies another way, you must apply your self to it, by making sharp Reflections upon matters in present controversie and debate, you must dip your stile in Gall and Vinegar, and be all Satyr and Invective against those that differ from you, and teach people to hate one another, and to fall together by the ears; and this men call *Gospel preaching*, and *speaking of Seasonable Truths*. Serm. 1.

Surely St. *Paul* was a *Gospel Preacher*, and such an one as may be a Patern to all others; and yet he did none of these; he preached what men might understand, and what they ought to believe and practice, in a plain and unaffected and convincing manner; he taught *such things as made for peace*, and *whereby he might edifie and build up men in their holy Faith*. The Doctrines that he preached will never be unseasonable, that men should leave their sins, and believe the Gospel, and live accordingly.

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And if men must needs be gratified with Disputes and Controversies, there are these great Controversies between God and the sinner to be stated and determined; Whether this be Religion, to follow our own lusts and inclinations, or to endeavour to be like God, and to be conformed to him, in Goodness, and Mercy, and Righteousness, and Truth, and Faithfulness? Whether Jesus Christ be not the *Messias* and Saviour of the world? Whether Faith and Repentance and Sincere Obedience be not the Terms of Salvation, and the necessary Conditions of Happiness? Whether there shall be a future Judgment, when all men shall be sentenced according to their works? Whether there be a Heaven and Hell? Whether good men shall be eternally and unspeakably happy, and wicked men extreamly and everlastingly miserable? These are the great Controversies of Religion, upon which we are to dispute on God's behalf against sinners. God asserts, and sinners deny these things, not in Words, but which is more emphatical and significant, in their Lives and Actions. These are practical

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practical Controversies of *Faith*, and it concerns every man to be resolved and determined about them, that he may frame his life accordingly. Serm. I.

And so for *Repentance*; God says, Repentance is a forsaking of sin, and a through change and amendment of life; the sinner says that it is only a formal Confession, and a slight asking of God forgiveness: God calls upon us speedily and forthwith to repent; the sinner saith 'tis time enough, and it may safely be defer'd to sickness or death; these are important Controversies and matters of moment. But men do not affect common Truths; whereas these are most necessary: And indeed whatever is generally useful and beneficial, ought to be common, and not to be the less valued, but the more esteemed for being so.

And as these Doctrines of *Faith* and *Repentance* are never unseasonable, so are they more peculiarly proper when we celebrate the Holy Sacrament, which was instituted for a solemn and standing Memorial of the Christian Religion, and is one of the most powerful

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ful Arguments and Perſwaſives to repentance and a good life.

The Faith of the Goſpel doth more particularly reſpect the death of Chriſt; and therefore it is call'd *Faith in his Blood*, becauſe *that* is more eſpecially the Object of our Faith; the Blood of Chriſt, as it was a Seal of the truth of his Doctrine, ſo it is alſo a Confirmation of all the Bleſſings and Benefits of the New Covenant.

And it is one of the greateſt Arguments in the world to repentance. In the Blood of Chriſt we may ſee our own guilt, and in the dreadful Sufferings of the Son of God, the juſt deſert of our ſins; for *he hath born our griefs, and carried our ſorrows, he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for our iniquities*; therefore the Commemoration of his Sufferings ſhould call our ſins to remembrance, the Repreſentation of his Body broken, ſhould melt our hearts; and ſo often as we remember that *his blood was ſhed for us, our eyes* ſhould *run down with rivers of tears*; ſo often as we *look upon him whom we have pierced*, we ſhould *mourn over him*.

When

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When the Son of God ſuffered, *the rocks were rent in ſunder*; and ſhall not the conſideration of thoſe ſufferings be effectual to break the moſt ſtony and obdurate heart? Serm. I.

What can be more proper when we come to this Sacrament, than the renewing of our Repentance? When we partake of this Paſſover, we ſhould *eat it with bitter herbs*. The moſt ſolemn Expreſſions of our Repentance fall ſhort of thoſe Sufferings which our bleſſed Saviour underwent for our ſins; if *our head were waters, and our eyes fountains of tears*, we could never ſufficiently lament the curſed Effects and Conſequences of thoſe provocations which were ſo fatal to the Son of God.

And that our Repentance may be real, it muſt be accompanied with the Reſolution of a better life; for if we return to our ſins again, *we trample under foot the Son of God, and profane the Blood of the Covenant*, and out of *the Cup of Salvation we drink our own damnation*, and turn that which ſhould ſave us into an inſtrument and Seal of our own ruin.

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SERMON II.

Preach'd on *Aſh-Wedneſday.*

Of confeſſing and forſaking Sin, in Order to Pardon.

PROV. XXVIII. 13.

He that covereth his ſins ſhall not proſper: but whoſo confeſſeth and forſaketh them, ſhall have mercy.

SInce we are all ſinners, and liable to the Juſtice of God, it is a matter of great moment to our comfort and happineſs, to be rightly informed by what Means, and upon what Terms, we may be reconciled to God, and find mercy with him. And to this purpoſe the Text gives us this advice and direction, *whoſo confeſſeth and forſaketh his ſin, ſhall have mercy.*

In

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Vol. 8. In which words there is a great Bleſſing and Benefit declared and promiſed to ſinners, upon certain Conditions. The Bleſſing and Benefit promiſed, is *the mercy and favour of God*, which comprehends all the happy Effects of God's mercy and goodneſs to ſinners. And the Conditions upon which this Bleſſing is promiſed are two, *Confeſſion of our ſins, and forſaking of them*; and theſe two contain in them, the whole nature of that great and neceſſary Duty of Repentance, without which a ſinner can have no reaſonable hopes of the mercy of God.

I. Here is a Bleſſing or Benefit promiſed, which is *the mercy and favour of God*. And this in the full extent of it, comprehends all the Effects of the mercy and goodneſs of God to ſinners, and doth primarily import the pardon and forgiveneſs of our ſins. And this probably *Solomon* did chiefly intend in this expreſſion; for ſo the *mercy* of God doth moſt frequently ſignifie in the Old Teſtament, *viz.* the forgiveneſs of our ſins. And thus the Prophet

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phet explains it, *Isa.* 55.7. *Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* Serm. 2.

But now since the clear revelation of the Gospel, the *mercy* of God doth not only extend to the pardon of sin, but to power against it; because this also is an Effect of God's free grace and mercy to sinners, to enable them, by the grace of his holy Spirit, to master and mortifie their lusts, and to persevere in Goodness to the end.

And it comprehends also our final pardon and absolution at the great day, together with the glorious Reward of eternal life, which the Apostle expresseth, by *finding mercy with the Lord in that day.* And this likewise is promised to Repentance, *Acts* 3. 19. *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and he shall send Jesus Christ, who before was preached unto you*; that is, that when Jesus Christ who

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Vol. 8. who is now preached unto you ſhall come, you may receive the final ſentence of abſolution and forgiveneſs.

And thus much ſhall ſuffice to have ſpoken of the Bleſſing and Benefit here promiſed, *the mercy of God*; which comprehends all the bleſſed Effects of the divine grace and goodneſs to ſinners, the preſent pardon of ſin, and power to mortifie ſin, and to perſevere in a good courſe, and our final abſolulution by the ſentence of the great day, together with the merciful and glorious Reward of eternal life.

II. We will conſider in the next place, the Conditions upon which this Bleſſing is promiſed, and they are two, the *Confeſſing* and *Forſaking* of our ſins, *whoſo confeſſeth and forſaketh his ſin, ſhall have mercy*; and theſe two do contain and conſtitute the whole nature of Repentance, without which a ſinner can have no reaſonable hopes to find *mercy* with God. I begin with the

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First, the *Confession* of our sins; by which is meant a penitent acknowledgment of our faults to God; to *God* I say, because the Confession of our sins to *men* is not, generally speaking, a Condition of the forgiveness of them, but only in some particular cases, when our sins against God are accompanied and complicated with scandal and injury to men. In other cases the Confession of our sins to men is not necessary to the pardon of them, as I shall more fully shew in the progress of this Discourse.

All the difficulty in this matter is, that the *Confession* of our sins is opposed to the *covering* and *concealing* of them; *he that covereth his sin shall not prosper*: *but whoso confesseth them, shall have mercy*; but no man can hope to hide his sin from God, and therefore confession of them to God cannot be here meant. But this Objection, if it be of any force, quite excludeth Confession to God, as no part of *Solomon's* meaning; when yet Confession of our sins to God, is granted on all hands, to be a necessary Condition of the

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Vol. 8. forgiveness of them. And to take away the whole ground of this Objection; men are said in Scripture, when they do not confess their sins and repent of them, to hide and conceal them from God: Not to acknowledge them is as if a man went about to cover them. And thus *David* opposeth *confession of sins to God*, to the *hiding* of them, *Psal.* 32. 5. *I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid, I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord*; so that this is no reason, why the Text should not be understood of the Confession of our sins to God.

But because the necessity of confessing our sins to men (that is to the Priest) in order to the forgiveness of them, is a great point of difference between us and the Church of *Rome*, it being by them esteemed a necessary Article of Faith, but by us, so far from being necessary to be believed, that we do not believe it to be true; therefore for the clear stating of this matter, I shall briefly enquire into these *Two* things.

I. Whe-

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Serm. 2.

I. Whether Confeſſion of our ſins to the Prieſt, as taught and practiſed in the Church of *Rome*, be neceſſary to the forgiveneſs of them.

II. How far the diſcloſing and revealing of our ſins to the Miniſters of God is convenient upon other accounts, and for other purpoſes of Religion.

I. Whether Confeſſion of our ſins to the Prieſt, and the manner in which it is taught and practiſed in the Church of *Rome*, be neceſſary to the forgiveneſs of them. What manner of Confeſſion this is, the Council of *Trent* hath moſt preciſely determined, *viz.* "Secret Confeſſion to the Prieſt alone, "of all and every mortal ſin, which "upon the moſt diligent ſearch and "examination of our Conſciences we "can remember our ſelves to be guil-"ty of, ſince our Baptiſm; together "with all the Circumſtances of thoſe "ſins, which may change the nature "of them; becauſe without the per-"fect knowledge of theſe, the Prieſt "cannot make a judgment of the na-

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Vol. 8. "ture and quality of mens sins, nor "impose fitting Penance for them. This is the Confession of sins required in the Church of *Rome*, which the same Council of *Trent*, without any real ground from Scripture or Ecclesiastical Antiquity, doth most confidently affirm "to have been instituted by our "Lord, and by the Law of God to be "necessary to salvation, and to have "been always practised in the Catho-"lick Church.

I shall as briefly as I can examine both these Pretences, of the Divine Institution, and Constant Practice of this kind of Confession.

First, For the Divine Institution of it, they mainly rely upon three Texts; in the first of which there is no mention at all of Confession, much less of a particular Confession of all our sins with the Circumstances of them; in the other two there is no mention of Confession to the Priest; and yet all this ought clearly to appear in these Texts, before they can ground a Divine Institution upon them; for a Divine Institution is not to be founded upon

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upon obscure Consequences, but upon plain words.

The *First* Text, and the only one upon which the Council of *Trent* grounds the Necessity of Confession, is *John* 20. 23. *Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained:* It is a sign they were at a great loss for a Text to prove it, when they are glad to bring one that hath not one word in it concerning Confession, nor the least intimation of the necessity of it.

But let us see how they manage it to their purpose. The Apostles and their Successors (saith *Bellarmine*) by this power of *remitting* and *retaining sins*, are constituted Judges of the case of Penitents; but they cannot judge without hearing the Cause, and this infers particular Confession of sins to the Priest, from whence he concludes it necessary to the forgiveness of sins.

But do not the Ministers of the Gospel exercise this power of *remitting*

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Vol. 8. *sins* in Baptism? And yet particular Confession of all sins to the Priest is not required, no not in the Church of *Rome*, in the Baptism of adult Persons. And therefore according to them, particular Confession of sin to the Priest, is not necessary to his exercising the power of *remitting sins*, and consequently the necessity of Confession cannot be concluded from this Text.

And to shew how they are puzled in this matter, *Vasquez* by a strange device concludes the necessity of Confession from the power of *retaining sins*; for (says he) if the Priest have a power of *retaining sins*, that is of denying Pardon and Absolution to the Penitent, then he may impose Confession as a Condition of forgiveness, and not absolve the Penitent upon other terms. But supposing the Priest to have this unreasonable power, this makes Confession no otherwise necessary by Divine Institution, than going to *Jerusalem* or *China* is, in order to the forgiveness of our sins, or submitting to any other foolish condition, that the Priest thinks fit to require; for

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for according to this way of reasoning, this power of *retaining sins*, makes every foolish thing that the Priest shall impose upon the Penitent, to be necessary by Divine Command and Institution. Serm. 2.

But the truth is, this power of *remitting* and *retaining sins*, is exercised by the Ministers of the Gospel, in the administration of the Sacraments, and the preaching of the Gospel, which is call'd *the word of reconciliation, the ministry whereof is committed to them*: And thus the ancient Fathers understood it; and as a great Divine told them in the Council of *Trent*, it was perhaps never expounded by any one Father concerning the business of Confession.

The *Second* Text they alledge to this purpose is, 1 *John* 1. 9. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.* Here indeed is Confession; but general, not particular, as appears by the opposition, *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive our selves, and the truth is not in us: but if we confess our sins*, that is, if we

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Vol. 8. acknowledge our ſelves to have been ſinners: And then here is not a word of confeſſing to the Prieſt; the Confeſſion here meant is plainly to God, becauſe it follows, *he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins*, that is, God, who is neceſſarily underſtood in the former part of the ſentence; as if it had run thus, *if we confeſs our ſins to God, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins.*

The *Third* Text is, *Jam.* 5. 16. *Confeſs your faults one to another, and pray one for another.* And here again there is only mention of Confeſſion, but not a word of the Prieſt; and for another Reaſon, if I had been to adviſe them, they ſhould not have preſt this Text for their ſervice in this cauſe, becauſe it does them as much hurt as good; for it is certain, the Duty of Confeſſion here enjoyned is reciprocal and mutual, *confeſs your ſins one to another*: So that if by virtue of this Text the People are bound to confeſs their ſins to the Prieſt, the Prieſt is hereby as much obliged to confeſs his ſins to the People; which I dare ſay is more than they have a mind to prove from this Text.

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Text. The plain meaning whereof is this, that as Christians should be ready to perform all mutual Offices of Charity, so to assist and comfort one another by their Counsel and Prayers; and therefore the Apostle adviseth Christians when they are sick, if at the same time they be under any spiritual trouble, by reason of the Guilt of any sin lying upon their Consciences, to lay open their case to one another, that so they may have the help of one anothers Advice and Prayers; *confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed*, both of your bodily and spiritual distemper: not that the Priest or Minister is here excluded; St. *James* had spoken of that particular before, that when *any was sick*, he should *send for the Elders of the Church*, that he might in the first place have the benefit of *their* Counsel and Prayers; and then because private Christians may also be useful to one another in this kind, he adds, that they should also lay open their condition and troubles *to one another*, that so they might have the help of one anothers Advice and Prayers; and very probably all the Confession here meant Serm. 2.

of

Vol. 8. of private Christians *to one another* is of the offences and injuries they may have been guilty of, one towards another; that they should be reconciled upon this occasion, and as a testimony of their Charity, should *pray one for another*; whereas they are bound *to send for the Elders of the Church*, and *they* are *to pray over them*, as an act not only of *Charity*, but of *Superiority*, and by virtue of their Office in the Church, a more especial blessing being to be expected from *their* Prayers.

These three Texts are the main Arguments from Scripture, which they of the Church of *Rome* bring to prove their auricular or secret Confession to be of Divine Institution; and woful proofs they are; which shews what miserable shifts they are reduced to, who resolve to maintain a bad cause.

I proceed in the *Second* place, to discover the Falshood of their other Pretences, that this kind of Confession hath always been practised in the Catholick Church; and not only so, but believed absolutely necessary to the remission

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miſſion of mens ſins and their eternal ſalvation. Serm. 2.

The truth of the whole matter is this; publick Confeſſion and Penance for open and ſcandalous Crimes was in uſe, and with great ſtrictneſs obſerved in the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity, and there was then no general Law or Cuſtom, that exacted ſecret Confeſſion of ſins to the Prieſt, as a neceſſary part of repentance, and condition of forgiveneſs: afterward publick Penance was by degrees diſuſed, which plainly ſhews that, in the opinion of the Church, this Diſcipline, how uſeful ſoever, was not of abſolute neceſſity to reſtore men to the favour of God.

In place of this came in private Confeſſion to the Prieſt, particularly appointed to this Office, and call'd *the Penitentiary*; but upon occaſion of a ſcandal that hapned, this alſo was abrogated by *Nectarius* Biſhop of *Conſtantinople*; which ſhews that neither was this neceſſary. And this act of *Nectarius* was juſtified by his Succeſſor St. *Chryſoſtom*, who does over and over moſt expreſly teach, that Confeſſion

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on of our ſins to men is not neceſſary to the forgiveneſs of them, but that it is ſufficient to confeſs them to God alone; ſo that St. *Chryſoſtom* does plainly ſtand condemned by the Decrees of the Council of *Trent*.

And thus for ſeveral Ages the matter reſted, till the degeneracy of the Church of *Rome* growing towards its height, about the IX. and X. Centuries, ſome began to contend for the neceſſity of ſecret Confeſſion, and this in the year 1215. in the IV. Council of *Lateran* under Pope *Innocent* III. was decreed and eſtabliſh'd.

And this is the firſt publick Law that was made in the Chriſtian Church concerning this matter, notwithſtanding all the boaſts of the Council of *Trent*, about the antiquity of this Inſtitution and Practice; for *Gratian*, who lived about 50 years before this Council, tells us, that in his time ſeveral wiſe and religious men were of the contrary opinion, and did not hold Confeſſion neceſſary by virtue of any Divine Law. Afterwards in the Council of *Florence*, and eſpecially in that of

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of *Trent*, this Decree of the Council of *Lateran* was confirmed and enlarged in many particulars, of which I have already given some account. Serm. 2.

And whereas they pretend for themselves the universal Practice not only of the past, but present Church, we are able to shew from clear Testimony of their own Writers, that Confession, as taught and practised in the Church of *Rome*, is no where else in use at this day, neither among the *Abyssines*, nor *Indians* of St. *Thomas*, nor the *Nestorians*, nor the *Armenians*, nor the *Jacobites*, Churches of great antiquity and vast extent. And as for the *Greek* Church, if we may believe *Gratian*, and the Author of the Glos upon the Canon Law, the *Greeks* had anciently no Tradition concerning the necessity of Confession, nor do they at this day agree with the *Roman* Church in all points concerning it.

So that, in short, there is no Nation nor Church throughout the whole world, that bear the name of Christian, the *Roman* Church only excepted, that doth fully embrace and maintain the whole

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Vol. 8. whole Doctrine of the Council of *Trent* concerning Confeſſion; and yet according to their principles, the whole is of equal neceſſity to be believed, as any part of it. With what face then do they declare, that this manner of Confeſſion always was, and ſtill is obſerved in the Catholick, that is in the whole Chriſtian Church?

I have not time to ſhew the great and manifold inconveniences and miſchiefs of this practice. How infinite a torture it is to the Conſciences of men, by entangling them in endleſs doubts and ſcruples; and how great a ſcandal it is to the Chriſtian Profeſſion, in the lewd management of it by the Prieſts, is evident from the two Bulls of Pope *Pius* the IV. and *Gregory* XV. which mention things too ſhameful to be declared; not to inſiſt upon other horrible abuſes of it to the vileſt and wickedeſt purpoſes; not ſo much to direct the Conſciences of men, as to dive into their Secrets, of which there are ſo many plain and notorious Inſtances, that they are paſt denyal.

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The other thing pretended for it is, that it is a great reſtraint upon men from ſin. And very probably it is ſo, to modeſt and well diſpoſed perſons: but experience ſhews how quite contrary an effect it hath upon others, who are the far greateſt part of mankind. Does not all the world ſee in the Popiſh Countries, in the time of their Carnival, juſt before *Lent*, the Anniverſary ſeaſon of Confeſſion, how ſcandalous a liberty men take of doing lewd and wicked things; and that for this very Reaſon, becauſe their Conſciences are preſently to be eaſed and ſcoured (as they call it) by Confeſſion and Abſolution? And they therefore take the oportunity to gratifie their luſts, and fill up the meaſure of their iniquity at that time; becauſe with one labour they can ſet their Conſciences right, and clear them of all guilt; and they look upon this as a ſpecial piece of ſpiritual good husbandry, to quit their ſcores with God at once, that ſo they may have no occaſion to trouble him, nor the Prieſt, nor themſelves again for a good while after. So that Confeſſion, inſtead of being a reſtraint from

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from sin, gives great encouragement to it, by deluding men into a vain hope of obtaining the pardon of their sins from time to time, tho they still continue in the practice of them; by which device, mens sins are at once *remitted* and *retain'd*; the Priest remits them by Absolution, and the penitent retains them, by going on still in the Commission of them, in hope of obtaining a new Absolution as often as occasion shall require. I proceed to the

II. Enquiry, namely, How far the discloſing and revealing our sins to the Ministers of God, may be convenient upon other accounts and to other purposes of Religion? To which the Answer is very plain and short; so far as is necessary either to the direction, or the ease of mens Consciences.

There are many Cases wherein men, under the guilt and trouble of their sins, can neither appease their own minds, nor sufficiently direct themselves, without recourse to some pious and prudent Guide; in these cases, men

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certainly do very well, and many times prevent a great deal of trouble and perplexity to themselves, by a timely discovery of their condition to some faithful Minister, in order to their direction and satisfaction, without which they shall never perhaps be able to clear themselves of the obscurity and entanglement of their own minds, but by smothering their trouble in their own breasts, shall proceed from one degree of melancholy to another, till at last they be plunged either in distraction or despair; whereas the discovery of their condition in time, would prove a present and effectual remedy. And to this purpose, a general Confession is for the most part sufficient; and where there is occasion for a more particular discovery, there is no need of raking into the particular and foul circumstances of mens sins, to give that advice which is necessary for the cure and ease of the Penitent; a thing so far from being desirable, that it must needs be very grievous to every modest and good man.

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And thus far Confeſſion is not only allowed, but encouraged among Proteſtants. In the *Lutheran* Churches, *Chemnitius* tells us, that private generneral Confeſſion is in uſe and practice. And *Calvin* freely declares, that he is ſo far from being againſt peoples repairing to their Paſtors to this purpoſe, that he earneſtly wiſheth it were every where obſerved before the receiving of the Sacrament. And the ſame is the ſenſe of our own Church, laying no neceſſity upon men in this matter, but adviſing, eſpecially before the Sa- Sacrament, thoſe who have any trouble upon their Conſciences, to repair to ſome diſcreet and faithful Miniſter of God's Word for advice and ſatisfaction. And thus all the good uſe, which can be made of Confeſſion, may be had in our Church, without the ill Effects and Conſequences of the *Romiſh* Confeſſion, and without laying a Yoke upon the Conſciences of men, which our Saviour never laid.

And now I have, as briefly and as plainly as I could, ſtated this Controverſie between us and the Church of *Rome*,

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Rome, concerning the necessity and use of secret Confession to the Ministers of God, as the proper Guides and Directors of our Consciences: But it is granted on all hands, that Confession of our sins to *God* is necessary; and there is no doubt but it is here intended in the Text, *viz.* a Penitent acknowledgment of our sins; the nature whereof I shall briefly explain to you. Serm. 2.

And it must not only be a general Confession that we are sinners; but there must be a particular acknowledgment of our sins to God, so far as upon a particular discussion and examination of our Consciences, we can call them to remembrance, especially our most heinous sins, which our Consciences will not suffer us to forget, must be particularly acknowledged, with the several aggravations of them.

And this Confession must be accompanied with such a shame and sorrow for our sins, as produceth in us a sincere resolution to leave them, and to betake our selves to a better course. These are the principal ingredients of a Penitent Confession.

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1. There must be shame, without which there is no hope of amendment. Confession always supposeth conviction of a fault; and he that is truly convinced that he hath done amiss, cannot but be ashamed of what he hath done. And thus the Penitents in Scripture were wont to make Confession of their sins to God; *Ezra* 9. 6. *O my God* (says he) *I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee my God.* So *Jeremiah*, Ch. 3. 25. *We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us; for we have sinned against the Lord.* And so likewise *Daniel*, Ch. 9. 5. *We have sinned, and have committed Iniquity, and done Wickedly, unto us belongeth confusion of Face.* And thus our Saviour describes the Penitent behaviour of the Publican, as ashamed to look up to that God whom he had offended, *Luke* 18. 13. *He would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven; but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.*

2. Confession must be always accompanied with great sorrow for our sins, confi-

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conſidering the great diſhonour we have brought to God, and the danger into which we have brought our ſelves; *I will declare mine iniquity*, (ſays David,) *and I will be ſorry for my ſin.* Serm. 2.

And this Sorrow muſt be proportionable to the degree of our Sin. If we have been very wicked, and have ſinned greatly againſt the Lord, and *have multiplied our tranſgreſſions*, and continued long in an evil courſe, have neglected God, and *forgotten him days without number*, the meaſure of our ſorrow, muſt bear ſome proportion to the degree of our Sins; if they have been *as Scarlet and Crimſon*, (as the Prophet expreſſeth it) that is, of a deeper dye than ordinary, our Sorrow muſt be as deep as our Guilt; for it is not a ſlight trouble and a few tears that will waſh out ſuch ſtains.

Not that tears are abſolutely neceſſary, tho' they do very well become, and moſt commonly accompany a ſincere Repentance. All tempers are not in this alike; ſome cannot expreſs their ſorrow by tears, even then when they

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Vol. 8. are moſt inwardly and ſenſibly grieved. But if we can eaſily ſhed tears upon other occaſions; certainly *rivers of tears* ought to *run down our eyes*, becauſe we have broken Gods Laws, the Reaſonable, and Righteous, and good Laws of ſo good a God, of ſo Gracious a Soveraign, of ſo mighty a Benefactor, of the Founder of our Being, and the perpetual Patron and Protector of our lives: but if we cannot command our tears, there muſt however be great trouble and contrition of Spirit, eſpecially for great ſins; to be ſure to that degree as to produce the

3. Property I mentioned of a Penitent Confeſſion, namely, a ſincere Reſolution to leave our ſins, and betake our ſelves to a better courſe. He does not confeſs his fault, but ſtand in it, who is not reſolved to amend. True Shame and Sorrow for our Sins is utterly inconſiſtent with any thought of returning to them. It argues great obſtinacy and impudence to confeſs a fault and continue in it. Whenever we make Confeſſion of our ſins to God, *ſurely it is meet to ſay unto him, I will not offend any more, that which I know not*

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not teach thou me, and if I have done iniquity, I will do no more. Serm. 2.

This is the *firſt* part of Repentance mentioned in the Text, the firſt Condition of our finding mercy with God, the Penitent acknowledgment of our ſins to him. I proceed to the

Second Condition required to make us capable of the mercy of God, which is the actual *forſaking* of our ſins; *whoſo confeſſeth and forſaketh them ſhall have mercy.* I ſhall not go about to explain what is meant by *forſaking ſin*, it is that which every body can underſtand, but few will do; there lies all the difficulty. I ſhall only put you in mind, that forſaking of ſin comprehends our return to our duty, *that* neceſſarily follows from it. In ſins of Commiſſion, he that hath left any Vice, does thereby become maſter of the contrary Virtue, *virtus eſt vitium fugere*; not to be drunk, is to be ſober; not to oppreſs, or defraud, or deal falſly, is to be Juſt and Honeſt: and for ſins of Omiſſion, the forſaking of them is nothing elſe, but the doing of thoſe Duties which we omitted and

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neglected before. And therefore what *Solomon* here calls *forsaking of sin*, is elsewhere in Scripture more fully expreſt, by *ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well. Isa.* 1. 16. By forsaking our sins and turning to God; *Isa.* 55. 7. *Let the wicked man forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord.* By turning from all our sins, and keeping all Gods Laws and Statutes; *Ezek.* 18. 21. *If the wicked will turn from all his sins which he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right.*

And this is a moſt Eſſential part of Repentance, and a neceſſary condition of our finding mercy with God. That part of Repentance which I have mentioned and inſiſted upon before, the Penitent acknowledgment of our sins to God, with Shame and Sorrow for them, and a firm purpoſe and Reſolution to leave them, all this is but Preparatory to the actual forſaking of them: that which perfects and compleats our Repentance, is *to turn from our evil ways*, and *to break off our sins by righteouſneſs.*

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Serm. 2.

And these terms of *confessing* and *forsaking our sins*, are Reasonable in themselves, and Honourable to God, and Profitable to us, and upon lower Terms we have no reason to expect the Mercy of God, nor in truth are we capable of it, either by the present forgiveness of our sins, or the final absolution of the great day, and the blessed Reward of Eternal Life. God peremptorily requires this change, as a condition of our Forgiveness and Happiness; *Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out*, Acts 3. 19. *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments*, Matth. 19. 17. *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord*, Heb. 12. 14. And why should any man hope for the Mercy of God upon other Terms, than those which he hath so plainly and peremptorily declared?

It is a mean and unworthy thought of God, to imagine that he will accept men to his favour and eternal life upon other Terms than of better obedience. Will any wise Father or Prince accept less from his Children and Subjects? will they be satisfied with sighs and

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Vol. 8. and tears, as well as with Obedience? And well pleaſed if they be but melancholy for their faults, tho' they nenever mend them? We muſt not impute that to God, which would be a defect of Wiſdom and good Government, in any Father or Prince upon Earth. God values no part of Repentance upon any other account, but as it tends to reclaim us to our Duty, and ends in our Reformation and amendment.

This is that which qualifies us for the Happineſs of another Life, and *makes us meet to be made partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light.* And without this, tho' God ſhould be pleaſed to forgive us, yet we could not forgive our ſelves; and notwithſtanding the legal diſcharge from Guilt, the Sting of it would remain, and we ſhould like our firſt Parents after they had ſinn'd, run away and *hide our ſelves from God*, tho' he ſpake never ſo kindly to us. God hath placed in every Man's mind an inexorable Judge, that will grant no Pardon and Forgiveneſs but to a reformed Penitent, to him that hath ſuch a ſenſe of the Evil of his paſt

past Life, as to become a better man for the future. Serm. 2.

And whoever entertains any other notion of the Grace and Mercy of God to Sinners, confounds the Nature of Things, and does plainly overthrow the Reason of all Laws, which is to restrain men from Sin: But when it is committed, to Pardon it without Amendment, is to Encourage the Practice of it, and to take away the Reverence and Veneration of those Laws, which seem so severely to forbid it. So that next to impunity, the forgiveness of Mens sins upon such easie and unfit Terms, gives boldness and encouragement to sin, and must necessarily in the opinion of men lessen the Honour and Esteem of God's Laws.

And thus I have Considered and Explained both the Blessing and Benefit which is here promised and declared, *viz. the Mercy and Favour of God*, which comprehends both the present Forgiveness of our Sins, and Power against them, and Grace to Persevere in Goodness to the end, and our final Abso-

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Abſolution at the great day, and the Glorious and Merciful Reward of Eternal Life: and likewiſe the Conditions upon which this Bleſſing is promiſed, *viz.* the Penitent *acknowledgment* of our ſins to God, with ſuch Shame and Sorrow for them, as produceth a ſincere Reſolution of leaving them, and returning to a better courſe, and the *actual forſaking* of them, which involves in it our actual return to our Duty, and a Conſtant and Sincere obedience to the Laws of God in the future courſe of our lives.

I ſhall now make ſome Application of this Diſcourſe to our ſelves. I am ſure we are all nearly concerned in it. The beſt of us have many ſins to confeſs and forſake; ſome of us very probably have need to change the whole courſe of our Lives, to put us into a capacity of the Mercy of God. This work can never be unſeaſonable; but there cannot be a more proper time for it, than when we are ſolemnly preparing our ſelves to receive the Holy Sacrament; in which as we do Commemorate the great Mercy of God to Mankind, ſo we do likewiſe renew

and

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and confirm our Covenant with him, that Holy Covenant wherein we engage our ſelves to forſake our ſins, as ever we expect the forgiveneſs of them at God's hand. Serm. 2.

To perſwade us hereto, be pleaſed to conſider the Reaſonableneſs of the Thing, the infinite Benefit and Advantage of it; and which is beyond all other Arguments, the abſolute Neceſſity of it, to make us capable of the Mercy and Forgiveneſs of God, in this World and the other, and *to deliver us from the wrath which is to come*, and from thoſe terrible ſtorms of vengeance, which will infallibly fall upon impenitent ſinners: So that we have all the Reaſon and all the Encouragement in the World, to reſolve upon a better courſe. Upon this Condition, the Mercy of God is ready to meet and embrace us, God will Pardon our greateſt provocations, and be perfectly reconciled to us. So he hath declared by the Prophet, *Iſaiah* 1. 16. *Waſh ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well. Come now and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord, tho'*

your

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Vol. 8. *your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as white as ſnow; tho' they be red as crimſon, they ſhall be as wool.* And what greater Encouragement can we deſire, than that upon ſo eaſie and advantageous Terms, God ſhould be ſo ready to have an end put to all Controverſies and Quarrels between him and us.

I beſeech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to take up a ſerious Reſolution *to break off your ſins by repentance,* and to reform whatever, upon due ſearch and tryal of your ways, you ſhall find to be amiſs in your lives.

I beſeech you by the Mercies of God, that *Mercy* which naturally *leads to repentance,* and which is *long-ſuffering to us-ward,* on purpoſe *that we may not periſh, but come to repentance,* which hath ſpared us ſo often, and is not yet exhauſted and tired out by our intolerable obſtinacy, and innumerable provocations; that *mercy* which moved the Son of God to become man, to live among us, and to die for us; who now as it were ſpeaks to us from the Croſs

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Croſs, extending his pierced Hands, and painful Arms to embrace us, and through the gaſping wounds of his ſide, lets us ſee the tender and bleeding Compaſſion of his Heart; that *mercy* which if we now deſpiſe it, we ſhall in vain one day implore, and catch hold of, and hang upon, to ſave us from ſinking into Eternal Perdition; that *mercy*, which how much ſoever we now preſume upon, will then be ſo far from interpoſing between us and the wrath of God, that it will highly inflame and exaſperate it: For whatever impenitent ſinners may now think, they will then certainly find that the Divine Juſtice, when it is throughly provoked, and whetted by his abuſed Mercy and Goodneſs, will be moſt terribly ſevere, and like a Raſor ſet with Oyl, will cut the keener for its ſmoothneſs. Serm. 2.

Conſider this all ye that forget God, leſt he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver: Conſider and ſhew your ſelves men, O ye tranſgreſſours!

We do conſider all this (may ſome perhaps ſay) but we have been great ſinners,

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ſinners, ſo great, that we doubt whether our caſe be not already deſperate.

This, if it be ſenſibly ſaid, with deep Sorrow and Contrition, with that Shame and Confuſion of face, which becomes great offenders, is a good Confeſſion, and the beſt Reaſon in the World, why ye ſhould now *break off your ſins*: For if what you have already done, do really make your caſe ſo doubtful and difficult; do not by ſinning yet more and more againſt the Lord, make it quite Deſperate and paſt Remedy; do but you *Repent*, and God will yet *return and have Mercy upon you.* And do not ſay you cannot do it, when it muſt be done, or you are undone. Power and neceſſity go together; when men are hard preſt they find a power which they thought they had not; and when it comes to the puſh, men can do that which they plainly ſee they either muſt do, or be ruined for ever.

But after all this, I am very ſenſible how great a need there is of God's powerful Aſſiſtance in this caſe, and

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that it is not an ordinary resolution, and common measure of God's Grace, that will reclaim those who have been long habituated to an evil course. Serm. 2.

Let us therefore earnestly beg of him, that he would make these Counsels effectual, that he would *grant us repentance unto life*, that he would make us all sensible of our faults, sorry for them, and resolved to amend them; and let us every one put up *David's* prayer to God for our selves, *Deal with thy Servant according to thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes; order my steps in thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me; teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, that I may keep them unto the end.*

I have now done; I am only to mind you of another Duty, which is to accompany our Repentance, and Fasting, and Prayer, as a Testimony of the Sincerity of our Repentance, and one of the best means to make our Fasting and Prayer acceptable to God, and to turn away his Judgments from us, and that is Charity and Alms to the Poor, whose number is very great among us,

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and their neceſſities very preſſing and clamorous, and therefore do call for a bountiful Supply.

And to convince men of the Neceſſity of this Duty, and the Efficacy of it in Conjunction with our Repentance, and Faſting, and Prayers, I ſhall only offer to your conſideration a few plain Texts of Scripture, which need no comment upon them. *Dan.* 4. 27. it is the Prophets advice to *Nebuchadnezzar*; *Break off thy ſins by righteouſneſs, and thine iniquity, by ſhewing mercy to the poor; if ſo be it may be a lengthning of thy tranquillity.* Acts 10. 4. the Angel there tells *Cornelius*, *Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before* God. Iſa. 58. 5. *Is not this the faſt which I have choſen, to looſe the bands of wickedneſs, to undo the heavy burthens, and to let the oppreſſed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are caſt out, to thy houſe; when thou ſeeſt the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thy ſelf from thine own fleſh? Then ſhall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health ſhall ſpring forth*

forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the Glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward; then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer thee, thou shalt cry, and he shall say here I am. To which I will only add that Gracious promise of our Saviour; *Blessed are the merciful; for they shall find mercy*; and that terrible sentence in St. *James*, *He shall have Judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy.*

Serm. 2.

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SERMON III.

Of Confeſſion, and Sorrow for Sin.

PSAL. XXXVIII. 18.

I will declare mine iniquity, and be ſorry for my Sin.

IN this Pſalm *David* does earneſtly beg Mercy and Forgiveneſs of God, and in order to the obtaining of it, he declares both his Sins, and his Repentance for them in theſe Words, which contain in them two of the Neceſſary Ingredients, or at leaſt Concomitants of a true Repentance, *viz.* Confeſſion of Sin, and Sorrow for it.

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I ſhall ſpeak ſomething of the *firſt* of theſe, *viz.* Confeſſion of Sin: but the *Second*, *viz.* Sorrow for Sin ſhall be the main Subject of my Diſcourſe.

I. Confeſſion of Sin; *I will declare mine iniquity*, or as it is in the Old Tranſlation, *I will Confeſs my wickedneſs*. Of which I ſhall ſpeak under theſe *three* Heads.

I. What Confeſſion of Sin is.

II. How far 'tis neceſſary.

III. What are the Reaſons and grounds of this neceſſity.

I. What Confeſſion of Sin is. It is a Declaration or Acknowledgment of ſome moral evil or fault to another, which we are conſcious to our ſelves we have been Guilty of. And this Acknowledgment may be made by us, either to God or Man. The Scripture mentions both. Confeſſion of our Sins to God is very frequently mentioned in Scripture, as the firſt and neceſſary part of Repentance; and ſometimes, and

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and in ſome caſes Confeſſion to men is not only recommended, but enjoyned. Serm. 3.

II. How far Confeſſion of our Sins is Neceſſary. That it is neceſſary to confeſs our Sins to God, the Scripture plainly declares, and is I think a matter out of all diſpute. For it is a Neceſſary part of Repentance, that we ſhould confeſs our Sins to God, with a due ſenſe of the evil of them; and therefore the Scripture maketh this a Neceſſary qualification, and Condition of Pardon and Forgiveneſs. *Prov.* 28. 13. *Whoſo confeſſeth and forſaketh his ſins ſhall have mercy.* 1 John 1. 9. *If we confeſs our ſins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs*; implying that if we do not confeſs our ſins to God, the guilt of them will ſtill remain; to *God* I ſay, for of Confeſſion to him St. *John* plainly ſpeaks, when he ſays, *He is faithful and juſt*; Who? *God* ſurely; who tho' he be not named before, yet is neceſſarily underſtood in the words before; *If we confeſs our ſins* i. e. to God, *he is faithful and juſt.*

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A general Confeſſion of our ſins is abſolutely neceſſary; and in ſome caſes a particular acknowledgment of them, and repentance for them, eſpecially if the ſins have been great and deliberate and preſumptuous; in this Caſe a particular Confeſſion of them, and Repentance for them, is neceſſary ſo far as we can particularly recollect them, and call them to Remembrance: Whereas for ſins of ignorance and infirmity, of ſurprize and daily incurſion, for leſſer Omiſſions, and the Defects and Imperfections of our beſt Actions and Services, we have all the Reaſon that can be to believe, that God will accept of a general Confeſſion of them, and Repentance for them. And if any Man ask me, where I find this diſtinction in Scripture, between a general and particular Repentanee? I anſwer, that it is not neceſſary it ſhould be any where expreſt in Scripture, being ſo clearly founded in the Nature and Reaſon of the thing; becauſe in many caſes it is not poſſible that we ſhould have a particular Knowledge and Remembrance of all our particular Sins; as is plain in Sins of ignorance, ſince our very calling

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calling them by that Name, does neceſſarily ſuppoſe that we do not know them. It is impoſſible we ſhould remember thoſe Sins afterwards, which we did not know when they were committed: And therefore either a general Repentance for theſe and the other Sins I mentioned of the like Nature, muſt be ſufficient in order to the Pardon of them; or we muſt ſay, that they are unpardonable, which would be very unreaſonable, becauſe this would be to make leſſer Sins more unpardonable, than thoſe which are far greater. Serm. 3.

And yet tho' this difference between a general and particular Repentance be no where expreſly mention'd in Scripture, there does not want foundation for it there. Pſal. 19. 12. *Who can underſtand his errours? Cleanſe thou me from ſecret Sins.* (i. e.) Such as we do not diſcern and take notice of, when they are committed: And yet *David* ſuppoſeth, that upon a general Acknowledgment of them, and Repentance for them, we may be cleanſed from them; tho' we cannot make a particular Acknowledgment

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ledgment of them, and exercise a particular Repentance for them, because they are *secret*, and we do not particularly understand what they are.

As for our confessing our Sins to Men, both Scripture and Reason do in some cases recommend and enjoyn it. As,

1. In order to the obtaining of the Prayers of good men for us. *James* 5. 16. *Confess your Sins one to another*; he said before, *The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.* This in all probability is meant of the Miraculous Power of Prayer, which St. *Chrysostom* reckons among the Miraculous Gifts of the Spirit, bestowed upon Christians in the first Ages of the Church, and this is very much countenanc'd and confirm'd by what presently follows after this command of *Confessing our Sins one to another, and praying one for another*, and given as the Reason of it; *for the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous Man availeth much*; the Original is δέησις ἐνεργουμένη, *the inspir'd prayer*, which in the verse before, is call'd *the prayer of faith*,

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faith, meaning that Miraculous Faith, in the Power whereof Chriſtians did obtain of God whatever they were inſpir'd to ask of him; according to our Saviour's promiſe in the Goſpel, concerning the efficacy of the Prayers of Chriſtians, which we find mention'd among the other Miraculous Powers, which were to be conferr'd upon them by the coming of the Holy Ghoſt. Serm. 3.

2. Confeſſion of our Sins to Men is likewiſe reaſonable, in order to the eaſe and ſatisfaction of our minds, and our being directed in our Duty for the future. In this Caſe common Reaſon and Prudence, without any Precept of Scripture, will direct men to have recourſe to this remedy, *viz.* to diſcover and lay open our diſeaſe to ſome skilful ſpiritual Phyſician, to ſome faithful Friend or prudent Guide, in order to ſpiritual advice and direction, for the peace and ſatisfaction of our minds. And then,

3. In caſe our Sins have been publick and ſcandalous, both Reaſon and the practice of the Chriſtian Church do

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Vol. 8. do require, that when men have publickly offended, they ſhould give publick Satisfaction, and open Teſtimony of their Repentance.

But as for private and *auricular Confeſſion* of our Sins to a Prieſt in all caſes, and as of abſolute neceſſity to our obtaining Pardon and Forgiveneſs from God, as the Church of *Rome* teacheth, this is neither neceſſary by divine Precept, nor by any Conſtitution and Practice of the ancient Chriſtian Church, as I have ſhewn in my former diſcourſe.

Not to mention the bad conſequences of this Practice, and the impious and dangerous uſe which hath been made of this Seal of Confeſſion, for the concealing and carrying on of the moſt wicked and barbarous deſigns; and the debauching of the Penitents, by drawing them into the Commiſſion of the ſame and greater Sins, than thoſe which they confeſſed; which the more devout Perſons of that Church have frequently complain'd of. I proceed now to ſhew briefly in the

III. Place,

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III. Place, the Grounds and Reasons of the neceſſity of confeſſing our Sins to God; and I ſhall but juſt mention them. Serm. 3.

1. From the Precept and Command of God; for which I have already produced clear Proof of Scripture.

2. From the Nature of the thing, becauſe without this there can be no Repentance towards God. He that will not ſo much as own the faults which he hath been guilty of, can never Repent of them. If we will not confeſs our Sins to God, we are never like to be ſorry for them. Thus much for the *firſt* thing in the Text, the Confeſſion of our Sins. I proceed now to the

Second Ingredient of Repentance mentioned in the Text, which is Sorrow for Sin; *I will declare mine iniquity, and be ſorry for my Sin.* In the handling of this Argument, I ſhall

I. Conſider the Nature of this Paſſion of Sorrow.

2. The

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II. The Reaſon and Grounds of our Sorrow for Sin.

III. The Meaſure and Degrees of it.

IV. How far the outward expreſſion of our inward grief by Tears is neceſſary to a true Repentance.

I. For the Nature of this Paſſion. Sorrow is a trouble or diſturbance of Mind, occaſioned by ſomething that is evil, done or ſuffer'd by us, or which we are in danger of ſuffering, that tends greatly to our damage or miſchief: So that to be ſorry for a thing, is nothing elſe but to be ſenſibly affected with the Conſideration of the evil of it, and of the miſchief and inconvenience which is like to redound to us from it: Which if it be a Moral evil, ſuch as Sin is, to be ſorry for it, is to be troubled that we have done it, and to wiſh with all our hearts that we had been wiſer, and had done otherwiſe; and if this Sorrow be true and real, if it abide and ſtay upon us, it will produce a firm Purpoſe

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Purpoſe and Reſolution in us, not to do the like for the future. Serm. 3.

'Tis true indeed, that we are ſaid to be ſorry for the death and loſs of Friends; but this is rather the effect of Natural Affection than of our Reaſon, which always endeavours to check and moderate our grief for that which we cannot help, and labours by all means to turn our Sorrow into patience: And we are ſaid likewiſe to grieve for the miſeries and ſufferings of others; but this is not ſo properly Sorrow, as Pity and Compaſſion. Sorrow rather reſpects our ſelves, and our own doings and Sufferings. I proceed in the

II. Place To enquire into the Reaſons and Grounds of our Sorrow for Sin; and they, as I have already hinted, are theſe *two*; the Intrinſecal, or the Conſequent evil of Sin; either the evil of Sin in it's ſelf, or the miſchiefs or inconveniencies which it will bring upon us. For every one that is ſorry for any fault he is guilty of, he is ſo upon one of theſe *two* accounts; either upon the ſcore of ingenuity, or of intereſt; either becauſe he hath done a thing which is unwor-

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Vol. 8. unworthy in it's ſelf, or becauſe he hath done ſomething which may prove prejudicial to himſelf; either out of a principle of love and gratitude to God, or from a principle of ſelf-love. And tho' the former of theſe be the better, the more generous principle of Sorrow; yet the latter is uſually the firſt; becauſe it is the more ſenſible, and toucheth us more nearly: For Sin is a baſe and ill-natur'd thing, and renders a Man not ſo apt to be affected with the injuries he hath offer'd to God, as with the Miſchief which is likely to fall upon himſelf. And therefore I will begin with the latter, becauſe it is uſually the more ſenſible cauſe of our Trouble and Sorrow for Sin.

1. The great Miſchief and Inconvenience that Sin is like to bring upon us. When a Man is thoroughly convinc'd of the danger into which his ſins have brought him, that they have *made him a child of wrath*, and *a Son of perdition*, that he is thereby fallen under the heavy diſpleaſure of Almighty God, and liable to all thoſe dreadful curſes, which are written in his Book, that ruin and deſtruction hang over

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over him, and that nothing keeps him from eternal and intolerable torments, but the Patience and Long-ſuffering of God, which he does not know how ſoon it may ceaſe to interpoſe between him and the wrath of God, and let him fall into that endleſs and inſupportable miſery, which is the juſt portion and deſert of his Sins; he that lays to Heart the ſad Eſtate and Condition, into which he hath brought himſelf by Sin, and the Miſchiefs which attend him every moment of his continuance in that ſtate, and how near they are to him, and that there is but a ſtep between him and Death, and hardly another between that and Hell, he cannot ſurely but be very ſorry for what he hath done, and be highly diſpleaſed and offended with himſelf, that he ſhould be the Author of his own ruin, and have contributed as much as in him lies to his everlaſting undoing. Serm. 3.

2. Another and better Principle of Sorrow for Sin, is ingenuity; becauſe we are ſenſible, that we have carried our ſelves very unworthily towards God, and have been injurious to him,

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Vol. 8. who hath laid all possible obligations upon us: For he hath made us, and hath given us our beings, and hath charged his watchful Providence with the continual care of us; his bounty hath ministred to the necessities and comforts of our Life; all the Blessings that we enjoy, are the Effects of his meer love and goodness, without any hope of requital, or expectation of any other return from us, than of love, of gratitude, and obedience; which yet are of no advantage to him, but very beneficial and comfortable to our selves: For he does not expect Duty and Obedience from us, with any regard of Benefit to himself, but for our sakes, and in order to our own Happiness.

Nay, his kindness did not stop here, but after we had abused him by our repeated provocations, yet he still continued his care of us; and when we had farther provoked him to withdraw his Love, and to call in his abused Goodness, and had done what lay in us to make our selves miserable, he would not suffer us to be undone, but found out a Ransom for us, and hath contrived

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contrived a way for the pardon of all our offences, and to reconcile us to himſelf, and to reſtore us to Happineſs, by the moſt ſtupendous and amazing condeſcenſion of love and goodneſs that ever was, even by giving his only Son to dye for us. Serm. 3.

And can we reflect upon all this, and not be ſorry and grieved at our very hearts, that we ſhould be ſo evil to him, who hath been ſo good to us, that we ſhould be ſo undutiful to ſo loving a Father, ſo unkind to ſo faithful and conſtant a Friend, ſo ungrateful and unworthy to ſo mighty a Benefactor? If any thing will melt us into Tears, ſurely this will do it, to conſider that we have ſinned againſt him, who made us, and continually preſerves us, and after all our unkindneſs to him, did ſtill retain ſo great a love for us, as to redeem us from Hell and Deſtruction, by the Death and Suffering of his Son, and notwithſtanding all our offences does ſtill offer us Pardon and Peace, Life and Happineſs. Such Conſiderations as theſe, ſeriouſly laid to

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Vol. 8. heart, should, one would think break the hardest heart, and make Tears to gush, even out of a Rock. I proceed in the

III. Place to consider the Measure and Degree of our Sorrow for Sin. That it admits of degrees, which ought to bear some proportion to the heinousness of our Sins, and the several aggravations of them, and the time of our continuance in them, is out of all dispute: For tho' the least Sin be a just cause of the deepest Sorrow; yet because our greatest grief can never bear a due proportion to the vast and infinite evil of Sin, God is pleased to require and accept such measures of Sorrow, as do not bear an exact correspondence to the Malignity of Sin, provided they be according to the capacity of our Nature, and in some sort proportioned to the degree and aggravations of our Sins; *i. e.* Tho' the highest degree of our Sorrow doth necessarily fall below the evil of the least Sin; yet God requires that we should be more deeply affected with some Sins, than others.

But

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Serm. 3.

But what is the loweſt degree which God requires in a true Penitent, and will accept, as it is impoſſible for me to tell, ſo it is unprofitable for any body to know: For no Man can reaſonably make this enquiry with any other deſign, than that he may learn how he may come off with God upon the cheapeſt and eaſieſt terms. Now there cannot be a worſe ſign, that a Man is not truly ſenſible of the great evil of Sin, than this, that he deſires to be troubled for it, as little as may be, and no longer than needs muſt: And none ſurely are more unlikely to find acceptance with God, than thoſe who deal ſo nearly, and endeavour to drive ſo hard a bargain with him.

And therefore I ſhall only ſay this in general, concerning the degrees of our Sorrow for Sin; that Sin being ſo great an evil in it ſelf, and of ſo pernicious a conſequence to us, it cannot be too much lamented and grieved for by us: And the more and greater our Sins have been, and the longer we have continued and lived in them, they call for ſo much the greater Sor-

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row, and deeper humiliation from us: For the reasoning of our Saviour concerning *Mary Magdalene*, *She loved much, because much was forgiven her*, is proportionably true in this case, those who have sinned much, should sorrow the more.

And then we must take this Caution along with us, that if we would Judge aright of the truth of our Sorrow for Sin, we must not measure it so much by the Degrees of sensible trouble and affliction, as by the rational Effects of it, which are hatred of Sin, and a fixt purpose and resolution against it for the future: for he is most truly sorry for his Miscarriage, who looks upon what he hath done amiss, with abhorrence and detestation of the thing, and wisheth he had not done it, and censures himself severely for it, and thereupon resolves not to do the like again. And this is the Character which St. *Paul* gives of a Godly Sorrow, 2 *Cor.* 7. 10. that *it worketh repentance*, μετάνοιαν, it produceth *a real change in our minds*, and makes us to alter our purpose and resolution: And tho' such a Person may not be so passionately

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onately and sensibly afflicted for Sin, yet it appears by the Effect, that he hath a deeper and more rational resentment of the evil of it, than that man who is sad and melancholy and drooping for never so long a time, and after all returns to his former sinful course; the Degree of his Sorrow may appear greater, but the Effect of it is really less. Serm. 3.

IV. As for the outward expressions of our Grief and Sorrow. The usual sign and outward expression of Sorrow is Tears; but these being not the Substance of our Duty, but an external Testimony of it, which some tempers are more unapt to, than others; we are much less to Judge of the Truth of our Sorrow for Sin by these, than by our inward sensible Trouble and Affliction of Spirit. Some Persons are of a more tender and melting disposition, and can command their Tears upon a little occasion, and upon very short warning; and such Persons that can weep for every thing else that troubles them, have much more reason to suspect the Truth of their Sorrow for Sin, if this outward expression of it

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Vol. 8. be wanting. And we find in Scripture, that the Sorrow of true Penitents does very frequently discover it self by this outward sign of it. Thus when *Ezra* and the people made Confession of their Sins to God, it is said, that *they wept very Sore*, *Ezra* 10. *Peter* when he reflected upon that great Sin of denying his Master, 'tis said, *He went forth and wept bitterly*. *David* also was abundant in this expression of his grief. In the Book of Psalms he speaks frequently of his *sighs*, and *groans*, and of *watering his couch with his tears*: yea so sensibly was he affected with the Evil of Sin, that he could shed tears plentifully for the Sins of others, *Psal.* 119. 136. *Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law.* In like manner *Jeremiah* tells us, that *his Soul did weep in secret places, for the pride and obstinacy of the Jews*; that *his eye did weep sore, and run down with tears*; *Jer.* 13. 17. And so likewise St. *Paul*, Philip 3. 18, 19. *There are many that walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies to the Cross of Christ.* And there seems to be this natural Reason for it, that all great and permanent

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manent impreſſions upon the Mind, all deep inward reſentments have uſually a proportionable effect upon the Body, and the inferiour Faculties. Serm. 3.

But tho' this happen very frequently, yet it is not ſo conſtant and certain: For all men have not the ſame tenderneſs of Spirit, nor are equally prone to tears; nay, tho' a Man can weep upon natural accounts, as upon the loſs of a Child or near Relation, or an intimate Friend, or when he lyes under a ſharp Bodily pain, yet a Man may truly repent, tho' he cannot expreſs his Sorrow for Sin the ſame way, provided he give Teſtimony of it by more real Effects: And therefore the Rule, which is commonly given by Caſuiſts in this caſe, ſeems to be more enſnaring, than true and uſeful; Namely, "that that man that can ſhed "Tears upon account of any evil leſs "than that of Sin, (as certainly all na-"tural evils are) ought to queſtion "the Truth of his Repentance for any "Sin that he hath committed, if he "cannot ſhed Tears for it. This I think is not true, becauſe there is ſcarce any Man, of ſo hard and unrelenting a Spirit,

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Vol. 8. Spirit, but the loſs of a kind Father, or a dear Child, or other near Relation, will force Tears, from him: And yet ſuch a Man, if it were to ſave his Soul, may not be able at ſome times to ſhed a Tear for his Sins. And the Reaſon is obvious; becauſe Tears do proceed from a ſenſitive trouble, and are commonly the Product of a natural affection; and therefore 'tis no wonder, if they flow more readily and eaſily upon a natural account; becauſe they are the Effect of a Cauſe ſuitable to their Nature. But Sorrow for Sin, which hath more of the Judgment and Underſtanding in it, hath not it's Foundation in natural affection, but in Reaſon; and therefore may not many times expreſs it ſelf in Tears, tho' it may produce greater and more proper Effects.

So that upon the whole matter, I ſee no Reaſon to call in queſtion the Truth and Sincerity of that Man's Sorrow and Repentance, who hates Sin and forſakes it, and returns to God and his Duty, tho' he cannot ſhed Tears, and expreſs the bitterneſs of his Soul for his Sin, by the ſame ſignifications that a Mother doth in the loſs

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loſs of her only Son. He that cannot weep like a Child, may reſolve like a Man, and that undoubtedly will find acceptance with God. A learned Divine hath well illuſtrated this Matter by this Similitude. Two Perſons walking together eſpie a Serpent, the one ſhrieks and cries out at the ſight of it, the other kills it: So is it in Sorrow for Sin; ſome expreſs it by great Lamentation and Tears, and vehement tranſports of paſſion; others by greater and more real effects of hatred and deteſtation, by forſaking their Sins, and by mortifying and ſubduing their Luſts: But he that kills it does certainly beſt expreſs his inward diſpleaſure and enmity againſt it. Serm. 3.

The Application I ſhall make of what hath been ſaid upon this Argument, ſhall be in *two* particulars.

I. By way of Caution, and that againſt a double miſtake about Sorrow for Sin.

1. Some look upon Trouble and Sorrow for Sin, as the whole of Repentance.

2. Others

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2. Others exact from themſelves ſuch a degree of Sorrow, as ends in melancholy, and renders them unfit both for the Duties of Religion, and of their particular Calling. The firſt concerns almoſt the generality of men; the latter but a very few in compariſon.

1. There are a great many, who look upon Trouble and Sorrow for their Sins, as the whole of Repentance, whereas it is but an Introduction to it. It is that which *works repentance*; but is not Repentance it ſelf. Repentance is always accompanied with Sorrow for Sin; but Sorrow for Sin does not always end in true Repentance: Sorrow only reſpects Sins paſt; but Repentance is chiefly preventive of Sin for the future. And God doth therefore require our Sorrow for Sin, in order to our forſaking of it. *Heb.* 6. 1. Repentance is there call'd *repentance from dead Works*. It is not only a Sorrow for them, but a turning from them.

There

Serm. 3.

There is no Reaſon why men ſhould be ſo willing to deceive themſelves, for they are like to be the loſers by *it*: But ſo we ſee it is, that many men are contented to be deceived to their own ruin; and among many other ways, which men have to cheat themſelves, this is none of the leaſt frequent, to think that if they can but ſhed a few Tears for Sin upon a death-bed, which no doubt they may eaſily do, when they ſee their Friends weeping about them, and apprehend themſelves to be in imminent danger, not only of Death, but of that which is more terrible, the heavy diſpleaſure, and the fiery Indignation of Almighty God, *into whoſe hands it is a fearful thing to fall*; I ſay, they think that if they can but do thus much, God will accept this for a true Repentance, and hereupon grant them Pardon and eternal life. And upon theſe fond hopes, they adjourn their Repentance, and the Reformation of their lives to a dying hour.

Indeed if I were to ſpeak to a Man upon his Death-bed, I would encou-

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rage him to a great Contrition and Sorrow for his Sins, as his last and only remedy, and the best thing he can do at that time; but on the other hand, when I am speaking to those that are well and in health, I dare not give them the least Encouragement to venture their Souls upon this, because it is an hazardous and almost desperate remedy; especially when men have cunningly and designedly contriv'd to rob God of the Service of their lives, and to put him off with a few unprofitable Sighs and Tears at their departure out of the World. Our Saviour tells us, that it is *not every one, that shall say unto him Lord! Lord! that shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*; and that there is a time, when *many shall seek to enter in, but shall not be able.*

The Summ of this Caution is, that men should take heed of mistaking Sorrow for Sin, for true Repentance, unless it be followed with the forsaking of Sin and the real Reformation of our Lives. *Ahab* humbled himself, but we do not find that he was a true Penitent. *Judas* was sorry for his Sin, and

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and yet for all that was *the Son of perdition*. *Eſau* is a ſad type of an ineffectual Sorrow for Sin, *Heb.* 12. where the Apoſtle tells us, that *He found no place for Repentance*, that is no way to change the mind of his Father *Iſaac*, *tho' he ſought it carefully with tears*. If Sorrow for Sin were Repentance, there would be ſtore of Penitents in Hell; for there is the deepeſt and moſt intenſe ſorrow, *weeping and wailing and gnaſhing of teeth*. Serm. 3.

2. Another miſtake which Men ought to be caution'd againſt in this Matter, is of thoſe who exact from themſelves ſuch a degree of Sorrow for Sin, as ends in deep melancholy, as renders them unfit both for the Duties of Religion, and of their particular Callings. But becauſe there are but very few who fall into this miſtake, I ſhall need to ſay the leſs to it. This only I ſhall ſay, that thoſe who indulge their ſorrow to ſuch a degree, as to drown their Spirits, and to ſink them into melancholy and mopiſhneſs, and thereby render themſelves unſerviceable

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Vol. 8. viceable to God, and unfit for the neceſſities of this life, they commit one Sin more to mourn for, and overthrow the End of Repentance by the indiſcreet uſe of the Means of it. For the End of Sorrow for Sin, is the forſaking of it, and returning to our Duty: But he that Sorrows for Sin, ſo as to unfit him for his Duty, he defeats his own deſign, and deſtroys the end he aims at.

II. The Other part of the Aplication of this Diſcourſe ſhould be, to ſtir up this affection of Sorrow in us. And here, if I had time, I might repreſent to you the great evil of ſin, and the infinite Danger and inconvenience of it. If the holy men in Scripture, *David*, and *Jeremiah*, and St. *Paul*, were ſo deeply affected with the ſins of others, as to ſhed *rivers of tears* at the remembrance of them; how ought we to be touched with the ſenſe of our own ſins, who are equally concerned in the diſhonour brought to God by them, and infinitely more in the danger they expoſe us to! Can we weep for our dead

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dead Friends? and have we no ſenſe of that heavy load of Guilt, of that *body of death*, which we carry about with us? Can we be ſad and melancholy for temporal Loſſes and Sufferings, and *refuſe to be comforted?* And is it no Trouble to us to have loſt Heaven and Happineſs, and to be in continual danger of the intolerable Sufferings, and endleſs Torments of another World? Serm. 3.

I ſhall only offer to your Conſideration, the great Benefit and Advantage which will redound to us from this *godly Sorrow*; *it worketh Repentance to Salvation, not to be repented of*, ſaith St. *Paul*. If we would thus *ſow in Tears*, we ſhould *reap in Joy*. This *Sorrow* would but *continue for a time*, and *in the morning* of the Reſurrection there would be *Joy* to all Eternity, *Joy unſpeakable and full of Glory*. It is but a very little while, and theſe *days of Mourning will be accompliſh'd*; and then *all Tears ſhall be wiped from our Eyes*; *and the ranſomed of the Lord ſhall come to Sion, with Songs, and*

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everlasting Joy shall be upon their Heads. They shall obtain Joy and Gladness, and Sorrow and Sighing shall flee away. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted: but woe unto you that laugh, for ye shall mourn and weep. If Men will rejoice in the pleasures of Sin, and *walk in the ways of their hearts, and in the sight of their eyes*; if they will *remove Sorrow from their heart*, and put away all sad and melancholy Thoughts from them, and are resolved to harden their Spirits against the sense of Sin, against the Checks and Convictions of their own Consciences, and the Suggestions of God's Holy Spirit, against all the Arguments that God can offer, and all the Methods that God can use to bring them to Repentance; let them *know, that for all these things God will bring them into judgment*; and because they would not give way to a timely and a seasonable Sorrow for Sin, they shall *lye down* in eternal *Sorrow, weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth shall be their portion for ever.* From which sad and miserable Estate,

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ſtate, beyond all Imagination, and paſt all Remedy, God of his infinite Goodneſs deliver us all, for *Jeſus Chriſt* his ſake, Serm. 3.

To whom, &c.

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SERMON IV.

Preach'd on *Aſh-Wedneſday*, 1689.

The unprofitableneſs of Sin in this Life, an Argument for Repentance.

JOB XXXIII. 27, 28.

He looketh upon men, and if any ſay, I have ſinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; He will deliver his ſoul from going into the pit, and his life ſhall ſee the light.

THE great Folly and Perverſeneſs of humane Nature is in nothing more apparent, than in this, that when in all other things Men are ge-

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nerally led and governed by their Intereſts, and can hardly be impoſed upon by any Art, or perſwaded by any Solicitation, to act plainly contrary to it; yet in matter of their Sin and Duty, that is, in that which of all other is of greateſt concernment to them, they have little or no regard to it; but are ſo blinded and bewitched with *the deceitfulneſs of ſin*, as not to conſider the infinite Danger and Diſadvantage of it; and at the ſame time, to caſt the Commandments of God, and the conſideration of their own Happineſs behind their backs.

And of this every Sinner, when *he comes to himſelf*, and conſiders what he hath done, is abundantly convinced; as appears by the Confeſſion and Acknowledgment, which is here in the Text put into the Mouth of a true Penitent; *I have ſinned, and perverted that which is right, and it profited me not*, &c.

In which Words here is a great Bleſſing and Benefit promiſed on God's part, and the Condition required on our part.

Firſt,

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First, The Blessing or Benefit promised on God's part, which is Deliverance from the ill Consequences and Punishment of Sin; *he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light*, that is, he will deliver him from Death and Damnation. And tho' perhaps temporal Death be here immediately intended, yet that is a Type of our Deliverance from eternal Death; which is expressly promised in the Gospel.

Secondly, Here is the Condition required on our part; *If any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not.* In which Words there are contained,

I. A penitent Confession of our Sins to God; for *he looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned*, that is, make a penitent Confession of his Sin to God.

II. A true Contrition for our Sin, not only for fear of the pernicious Consequences of Sin, and the Punishment that will follow it, implyed in these

Vol. 8. Words, *and it profited me not*, this is but a very imperfect Contrition: but from a just sense of the evil nature of Sin, and the Fault and Offence of it against God, that we have done contrary to Right and our Duty. *If any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right.* Here you see that true and perfect Contrition for our Sins, is made a necessary Condition of the Blessing and Benefit here promised, *viz.* Deliverance from the Punishment due to them.

III. Here is a description of the evil nature of Sin, it is *a perverting of that which is right.* Sin is a perverting of the Constitution and Appointment of God, and of the Nature and Order of Things. God hath given Man a Law and Rule to walk by, but *the foolishness of man perverteth his way.* The great Lines of our Duty are plain and visible to all Men, and if we would attend to the direction of our own Minds, concerning Good and Evil, every Man would be *a law to himself, He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good.* That which is right and just and good, is plain and obvious, and offers

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offers it self first to us, and when ever we sin, we go out of the right way that lies plain before us, and *turn aside into crooked paths.* But when we do that which is right, we act agreeably to the Design and Frame of our Beings, and comply with the true Nature and Order of Things; we do what becomes us, and are what we ought to be: but sin perverts the Nature of Things, and puts them out of course, *I have sinned and perverted that which was right.* Serm. 4.

IV. You have here an acknowledgment of the Mischievous and Pernicious Consequences of Sin; *I have sinned and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not.* Which last words are a μειωσις, in which much less is said than is meant and intended; *it profited me not*, that is, it was so far from being of advantage, that the Effects and Consequences of it were very Pernicious and Destructive.

And this is not only true as to the final issue, and event of an Evil course in the other World; but I shall endeavour to shew, that even in respect of

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Vol. 8. of this World, and the preſent Life, the Practice of ſome ſins is plainly Miſchievous to the temporal Intereſts of men; that others are wholly unprofitable; and that thoſe which pretend to bring ſome benefit and advantage will, when all accounts are caſt up, and all circumſtances duly weighed and conſidered, be found to do far otherwiſe.

Firſt, I ſhall ſhew, that the Practice of ſome Vices is Evidently Miſchievous and Prejudicial to us, as to this World; as all thoſe Vices which fall under the cognizance of Human Laws, and are puniſhed by them; Murther, Theft, Perjury, Sedition, Rebellion and the like; theſe cannot be denyed to be of pernicious conſequence to men, and therefore the great Patrons of Vice ſeldom plead for theſe, the inconvenience of them is ſo palpable, that ſome feel it, and all may ſee it every day.

But beſides theſe, there are many other ſorts of ſin, which human Laws either take no notice of, or do not ſo ſeverely Puniſh, which yet in their Natural

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Natural Conſequences, are very pernicious to our preſent intereſt; either they are a diſturbance to our minds, or dangerous to our health, or ruinous to our Eſtate, or hurtful to our Reputation, or it may be at once prejudicial to us, in all, or moſt of theſe reſpects; and theſe are the greateſt temporal inconveniences that men are liable to. Serm. 4.

All irregular Paſſions, as Wrath, Malice, Envy, Impatience and Revenge, are not only a diſturbance to our ſelves, but they naturally draw upon us hatred and contempt from others. Any one of theſe paſſions is enough to render a Man uneaſie to himſelf, and to make his Converſation diſguſtful and troubleſome to all that are about him; for all men naturally hate all thoſe, who are of an envious, or malicious, or revengeful temper, and are apt to riſe up and ſtand upon their guard againſt them. Anger and impatience are great deformities of the mind, and make a Man look as ugly, as if he had a wry and diſtorted Countenance; and theſe paſſions are apt to breed in others a ſecret contempt of

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us, and to bring our prudence into queſtion, becauſe they are ſigns of a weak and impotent mind, that either hath loſt, or never had the Government of it ſelf.

There are other Vices, which are plainly pernicious to our health, and do naturally bring Pains and Diſeaſes upon men; ſuch are Intemperance and Luſt; and tho' ſome may pretend to govern themſelves, in the Practice of theſe, with ſo much moderation and diſcretion, as to prevent the notorious bad conſequences of them, yet there are very few or none that do ſo; this is ſeldom more than a Speculation, and men that allow themſelves in any lewd or intemperate courſe, will find it very hard to govern themſelves in it; for after men have forfeited their innocence, and broke in upon their natural Modeſty, they are apt by degrees to grow profligate and deſperate; if a Man gives way but a little to his own vicious inclinations, they will ſoon get head of him, and no Man knows how far they will hurry him at laſt.

Beſides

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Serm. 4.

Besides that the Vices I am speaking of, Intemperance and Lust, have other great inconveniences attending them, they expose men more frequently, than most other Vices, to occasions of quarrel, in which men often lose their own lives, or take away other mens, by which they fall under the danger of the Law, and the stroke of publick Justice; or if they escape that, (as too often they do) they cannot fly from their own Consciences, which do commonly fill them with the horror and torment of such an action all their days; so pernicious are the usual Consequences of these Vices, of which we see sad instances every day.

Nor are these Vices less hurtful to mens Estates; for they are extreamly expensive and wasteful, and usually make men careless of all their business and concernments, liable to be cheated by those, whom they are forced to trust with their affairs, because they will not mind them themselves, and to be abused by crafty men, who watch the oportunities of their folly and weakness, to draw them into foolish

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fooliſh bargains. It is an old Obſervation, that more men periſh by Intemperance, than by the Sword; and I believe it is as true, that more Eſtates are diſſipated and waſted by theſe two riotous Vices, than by all other Accidents whatſoever.

And there is ſcarce any notorious Vice, by which men do not greatly ſuffer in their Reputation and good Name, even when the times are worſt and moſt degenerate; any wicked courſe, whether of debauchery or injuſtice, is a blemiſh to a Man's credit, not only in the eſteem of the Sober and Virtuous, but even of thoſe who are looſe and extravagant; for men are ſooner brought to Practiſe what is bad, than to approve of it, and do generally think all ſin and wickedneſs to be a ſtain upon them, whatever in a ſwaggering humor they may ſay to the contrary. A clear evidence of this is, that men do ſo ſtudiouſly endeavour to conceal their Vices, and are ſo careful that as few as may be ſhould be conſcious to them, and are ſo confounded if they be diſcovered, and ſo out of all patience when they are

are upbraided with them, a plain acknowledgment, that these things are shameful in themselves, and whatever face men may put upon things, that they do inwardly and at the bottom of their Hearts believe, that these Practices are deservedly of bad Reputation, and do, in the general opinion of Mankind, leave a blot upon them. Serm. 4.

Secondly, There are other sins, which tho' they are not usually attended with Consequences so palpably mischievous, yet are plainly unprofitable, and bring no manner of advantage to men.

Of this sort is all kind of Prophaneness, and customary Swearing in common Conversation, there is neither profit nor pleasure in them. What doth the Profane Man get by his contempt of Religion? He is neither more respected, nor better trusted for this quality; but on the contrary, it is many times really to his prejudice, and brings a great odium upon him, not only from those who sincerely love Religion, but from others also; tho'

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Vol. 8. tho' they are conscious to themselves, that they do not love Religion as they ought, yet they have a Veneration for it, and cannot endure that any one should speak slightly of it.

And 'tis as hard to imagine, where the pleasure of Profaneness lies. Men cannot but at first have a great reluctancy in their minds against it, and must offer considerable violence to themselves, to bring themselves to it; and when it is grown more familiar, and their Consciences are become more sear'd and insensible, yet whenever they are alone and serious, or when any affliction or calamity is upon them, they are full of fears and anguish, their guilt stares them in the face, and their Consciences are raging and furious.

And as all kind of Profaneness is unprofitable, so more especially customary swearing in ordinary Conversation, upon every occasion of passion, or any other trivial cause, nay it may be without cause, out of mere habit and custom. Now what can possibly be imagined to be the profit or plea-

sure

sure of this Vice! Sensual pleasure in it there can be none, because it is not founded in the temper of the Body; a Man may be naturally prone to Anger or Lust; but no Man I think is born with a swearing Constitution. Serm. 4.

And there is as little Profit as Pleasure in it; for the common and trivial use of Oaths makes them perfectly insignificant to their end, and is so far from giving credit to a Man's word, that it rather weakens the Reputation of it.

Thirdly, Those Vices which pretend to be of Advantage to us, when all accounts are cast up, and all Circumstances duly consider'd, will be found to be quite otherwise. Some Vices pretend to bring in profit; others to yield pleasure, but upon a thorow examination of the matter, these pretences will vanish and come to nothing.

The Vices which pretend to be most profitable are Covetousness and Oppression, Fraud and Falshood, and Perfidiousness: but if we look well,

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Vol. 8. into them, we ſhall find, that either they do not bring the Advantages they pretended to bring; or that the inconveniences which attend them are as great or greater, than the Advantages they bring; or elſe that the Practice of the oppoſite Virtues would be of much greater Advantage to us.

1. Some of theſe Vices do not bring the Advantages they pretend to do. Covetouſneſs may increaſe a Man's Eſtate, but it adds nothing to his Happineſs and Contentment; for tho' his Eſtate grow never ſo much, his want is ſtill as great as it was before, and his care and trouble continually greater; ſo that ſo long as he continues Covetous, the more Rich, the leſs Happy.

And then for Fraud and Falſhood; they are not of that real and laſting Advantage, that cunning but ſhort-ſighted men are apt to imagine. Nothing is truer than *that* of *Solomon*, *The lying tongue is but for a moment.* A Man can Practice the Arts of Falſhood and Deceit but for a little while, before

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before they will be discovered, and when they are discovered, they are so far from being any Advantage to him, that they turn to his prejudice, and the cunning Man begins to be in a bad case, and he that was wont to over-reach others, is at last caught himself. Serm. 4.

2. Several of these Vices are attended with inconveniences, as great or greater than the Advantages they bring. If a Man increase his Estate by Injustice and Oppression, yet he loseth his Reputation. Besides, that all fraudulent and unjust courses are apt to entangle a Man in a great many inconveniences, and to expose him to troublesome suits, for the keeping of what he hath unjustly gotten; it is very often seen, that what is gotten by injustice is spent in Law, and tho' it may be those whom he hath wronged never recover their right, yet first or last the unjust Man is put to more trouble and vexation about it, than the thing is worth. This *Solomon* observes, *Prov.* 15. 16. *In the revenue of the wicked there is trouble.*

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The perfidious Man by betraying a Friend or a Truſt, may perhaps make ſome preſent Advantage: but then by ſuch a villany he makes himſelf odious to all Mankind, and by this means, at one time or other, prevents himſelf of greater advantages which he might have had another way, and perhaps at laſt is miſerably cruſhed by thoſe whom he betrayed, who in the change and revolution of human affairs, may ſome time or other have the oportunity of being revenged. Or elſe,

3. The Practice of the oppoſite Virtues would be of far greater Advantage to us.

Truth and Fidelity are in common experience found to be a better and ſurer way of thriving, and more like to laſt and hold out, than Fraud and Falſhood; and as honeſty is a ſurer way of raiſing an Eſtate, ſo it brings along with it greater ſecurity of the quiet enjoyment of it; there is never any real occaſion, and ſeldom any colour and pretence of bringing ſuch a Man

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Man into trouble; for which reaſon *Solomon* ſays, *Better is the little which the righteous Man hath, than great poſſeſſions without right*; becauſe, tho' it be but little, yet it will wear like Steel, and he is like to enjoy it quietly, and may increaſe it; whereas the unjuſt Man is continually in danger of loſing what he hath gotten. Serm. 4.

And if this be the caſe, it is very plain, that thoſe Vices which pretend to bring the greateſt Advantage, are really unprofitable; and to theſe kind of Vices the Text ſeems to point more particularly, *If any ſay I have ſinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not*, &c.

But perhaps tho' there be no *profit* in any ſinful courſe, yet there may be ſome *pleaſure*; that comes next to be examined; and I doubt not to make it evident, that there is no ſuch pleaſure in ſin, as can make it a reaſonable Temptation to any Man to venture upon it. The Vices which pretend to bring the greateſt pleaſure, are Lewdneſs, and Intemperance, and Revenge.

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The *two* firſt of theſe are the higheſt Pretenders to Pleaſure: but God knows, and the ſinner himſelf knows, how thin and tranſitory this pleaſure is, how much trouble attends it, and how many ſighs and groans follow it; and whatever pleaſure they may miniſter to the ſenſe, they bring a great deal of anguiſh and perplexity to the mind; ſo that the trouble which they cauſe, does more than countervail the pleaſure which they bring: and they do not only diſturb the mind, but they diſeaſe the Body. How many are there, who for the gratifying of an inordinate Luſt, and for the incomprehenſible pleaſure of a drunken fit, have endured the violent burnings of a Feaver, or elſe have conſumed the remainder of their days in languiſhing ſickneſs and pain?

And the reaſon of all this is plain, becauſe all the pleaſures of ſin are violent, and forced, and unnatural, and therefore not like to continue; they are founded in ſome Diſeaſe and Diſtemper of our minds, and therefore

fore always end in pain and ſmart. Serm. 40

And as for Revenge; it is indeed a very eager and impatient deſire: but ſo far ſurely from being a pleaſure, that the very thoughts of it are extreamly troubleſome, and raiſe as great ſtorms in the mind of a Man, as any paſſion whatſoever; and I never heard of the pleaſure of being in a Storm: it is pleaſant indeed to be out of it, when others are in it. And when Revenge hath ſatisfied it ſelf, and laid its enemy bleeding at its foot, the Man that executed it commonly repents himſelf the next moment, and would give all the World to undo what he hath done; ſo that if there be any pleaſure in Revenge, it is ſo flitting and of ſo ſhort a continuance, that we know not where to fix it; for there is nothing but tumult and rage before the execution of it, and after it nothing but remorſe and horror; ſo that if it be a pleaſure, it is but of one moment's continuance, and laſts no longer than the act is a doing; and what Man in his wits would purchaſe ſo ſhort a pleaſure at ſo

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dear a price? This is moſt certainly true, and if it were well conſidered, ſufficient to convince any reaſonable Man of the unreaſonableneſs of this paſſion.

Cain is a fearful inſtance of this kind, who after he had drawn his Brother into the Field, and ſlain him there, how was he tormented with the guilt of what he had done, and forced to cry out, *my puniſhment is greater than I can bear*, or (as ſome Tranſlations render the words,) *mine iniquity is greater than that it can be forgiven*, Gen. 4. 13! *From thy face* (ſays he to God, in the anguiſh of his Soul) *from thy face ſhall I be hid, and I ſhall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth, and it ſhall come to paſs that every one that findeth me ſhall ſlay me*, v. 14. *Every one that findeth me*, how fearful did his guilt make him! When probably there was then but one Man in the World beſides himſelf. And I may ſay of this ſort of men, as St. *Jude* does of thoſe in his time, *Jude v.* 11. *Wo unto them, for they have gone in the way of* Cain, they

they are guilty of his Crime, and his doom ſhall be theirs. Serm. 4.

And here I cannot but take notice of a great Evil that grows daily upon us, and therefore deſerves with the greateſt ſeverity to be diſcountenanced and puniſh'd, I mean that of Duels, than which what can be more unchriſtian? And what can be more unreaſonable, than for men upon deliberation, and after the heat of Paſſion is over, to reſolve to ſheath their Swords in one anothers Bowels, only for a haſty word? And which is yet more unreaſonable, that becauſe two men are angry, and have quarelled with one another, and will fight it out, that therefore two more, who have no quarel, no kind of diſpleaſure againſt one another, muſt fight too, and kill one another if they can, for no reaſon and upon no provocation. Theſe falſe Rules of Honour will not paſs in another World, in the higheſt and greateſt Court of Honour, from whence there is no Appeal.

I ſhall conclude this whole Argument with that excellent ſaying of *Cato*,

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to, reported in *A. Gellius*, *Cogitate cum animis veſtris*, &c. "Conſider (ſays he) "with your ſelves, if ye be at any "trouble and pain to do a good acti- "on, the trouble will be ſoon over; "but the pleaſure and comfort of "what ye have done well, abides with "you all your days: but if to gratifie "your ſelves, you do any thing that "is wicked, the pleaſure will quick- "ly vaniſh; but the guilt of it will "ſtick by you for ever.

And is it not then much better to prevent all this trouble, by denying our ſelves theſe ſinful pleaſures, which will follow us with guilt while we live, and fill us with horror and deſpair when we come to die?

I ſhall now make ſome reflections upon what hath been delivered, and ſo conclude.

Firſt, What hath been ſaid upon this Argument, ought particularly to move thoſe who have ſo great a conſideration of this preſent life, and the temporal Happineſs of it, that the Practice of all Virtues is a friend to their

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their temporal, as well as eternal welfare, and all Vice is an Enemy to both. Serm. 4.

Secondly, This likewiſe takes off all manner of excuſe from Sin and Vice. It pretends not to ſerve the Soul, and to profit our future happineſs in another World; and if it be an Enemy alſo to our preſent welfare in this world, what is there to be ſaid for it?

Thirdly, (which I deſire to inſiſt a little longer upon) all the Arguments which I have uſed, to convince men of the folly of a wicked courſe, are ſo many ſtrong and unanſwerable Reaſons for Repentance; for when a Man is convinced, that he hath done fooliſhly, and to his own prejudice, that *he hath ſinned, and* that *it profited him not*, what can he do leſs, than to be heartily ſorry for it, and aſhamed of it, and reſolved to do better for the future? Nothing ſurely is more reaſonable than Repentance; and yet how hard is it to bring men to it? Either men will miſtake the Nature of it, and not do it effectually; or they will delay it, and not do it in time.

Men

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I. Men miſtake the Nature of Repentance; and there are *two* great miſtakes about it.

1. Of thoſe who make the great force and virtue of it to conſiſt, not ſo much in the Reſolution of the Penitent, as in the Abſolution of the Prieſt. And this the Church of *Rome*, in their Doctrine concerning Repentance does. For their Sacrament of Penance, (as they call it,) they make to conſiſt of two parts; the Matter of it, which conſiſts in theſe three acts of the Penitent, Confeſſion, Contrition, and Satisfaction; and the Form of it, which is the Abſolution of the Prieſt, in which they make the main virtue and force of Repentance to conſiſt, *in quâ præcipuè ipſius vis ſita eſt*, are the very words of the Council of *Trent*. And here is a wide difference betwixt us; for tho' the comfort of the Penitent may in ſome caſe conſiſt in the Abſolution of the Prieſt, yet the Virtue and Efficacy of Repentance does not at all conſiſt in it, but wholly in the Contrition and ſincere Reſolution of the Penitent, as the Scripture every where

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where declares: and to think otherwiſe, is of dangerous Conſequence; becauſe it encourageth Men to hope for the benefit of Repentance, that is the Pardon and forgiveneſs of their ſins, without having truly repented. And indeed the Council of *Trent* have ſo framed their Doctrines in this point, that any one may ſee, that they did not matter how much they abated on the part of the Penitent, provided the Power of the Prieſt be but advanced, and kept up in its full height. Serm. 4.

2. The other Miſtake is of thoſe, who make Repentance to conſiſt in the bare Reſolution of Amendment, tho' it never have its effect; that is, tho' the ſinner either do not what he reſolved, or do it only for a fit, and during his preſent Trouble and Conviction.

There is one caſe indeed, and but one, wherein a Reſolution not brought to effect is available, and that is, when nothing hinders the performance and execution of it, but only want of time and oportunity for it, when the Repentance is ſincere, and the Reſolu-

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Resolution real, but the Man is cut off between the actual Reformation which he intended, and which God, who sees things certainly in their Causes, knows would have followed, if the Man had lived to give Demonstration of it; but this is nothing to those who have the oportunity to make good their Resolution, and do not; for, because the resolution which would have been perform'd, had there been time and oportunity, is reckoned for a true Repentance, and accepted of God as if it had been done; therefore the Resolution which was not brought to effect when there was time and oportunity for it, hath not the Nature of true Repentance, nor will it be accepted of God.

I will add but one thing more upon this Head, because I doubt it is not always sufficiently considered; and that is this, that a sincere Resolution of a better course, does imply a Resolution of the means, as well as of the end; he that is truly resolved against any sin, is likewise resolved against the occasions and temptations that would lead and draw him to it; other-

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otherwiſe he hath taken up a raſh and fooliſh Reſolution, which he is not like to keep, becauſe he did not reſolve upon that which was neceſſary tothe keeping of it. So he that reſolves upon any part of his Duty, muſt likewiſe reſolve upon the means which are neceſſary to the diſcharge and performance of it; he that is reſolved to be juſt in his dealing, and to pay his debts, muſt be diligent in his Calling, and mind his buſineſs; becauſe without this he cannot do the other; for nothing can be more vain and fond, than for a Man to pretend that he is reſolved upon doing his Duty, when he neglects any thing that is neceſſary to put him into a capacity, and to further him in the diſcharge of it. This is, as if a Man ſhould reſolve to be well, and yet never take Phyſick, or be careleſs in obſerving his rules which are preſcribed in order to his health. So for a Man to reſolve againſt Drunkenneſs, and yet to run himſelf upon the temptations which naturally lead to it, by frequenting the Company of Lewd and Intemperate perſons, this is, as if a Man ſhould reſolve againſt the Plague, and run into the Peſt-houſe. Serm. 4.

What-

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Vol. 8. Whatever can reaſonably move a Man to be reſolved upon any End, will, if his Reſolution be wiſe and honeſt, determine him as ſtrongly to uſe the Means which are proper and neceſſary to that End.

Theſe are the common Miſtakes about this matter, which Men are the more willing to run into, becauſe they are loth to be brought to a true Repentance; the Nature whereof is not difficult to be underſtood, (for nothing in the world is plainer;) only men are always ſlow to underſtand what they have no mind to put in practice. But

II. Beſides theſe Miſtakes about Repentance, there is another great Miſcarriage in this matter, and that is the delay of Repentance; men are loth to ſet about it, and therefore they put it upon the laſt hazard, and reſolve then to huddle it up as well as they can: but this certainly is great folly, to be ſtill making more work for Repentance, becauſe it is to create ſo much needleſs trouble and vexation to our ſelves; 'tis to go on ſtill in playing a fooliſh part, in hopes to retrieve all by

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by an after-game; this is extreamly dangerous, becauſe we may certainly ſin, but it is not certain we ſhall repent, our Repentance may be prevented, and we may be cut off in our ſins; but if we ſhould have ſpace for it, Repentance may in proceſs of time grow an hundred times more difficult than it is at preſent. Serm. 4.

But if it were much more certain, and more eaſie than it is, if it were nothing but a hearty Sorrow and Shame for our ſins, and an asking God forgiveneſs for them, without being put to the trouble of reforming our wicked lives, yet this were great folly, to do thoſe things which will certainly grieve us after we have done them, and put us to ſhame, and to ask forgiveneſs for them. It was well ſaid of Old *Cato, næ tu ſtultus es homuncio, qui malis veniam precari, quam non peccare, thou art a fooliſh man indeed, who chuſeſt rather to ask forgiveneſs, than not to offend.*

At the beſt, Repentance implies a fault; it is an after-Wiſdom, which ſuppoſeth a Man firſt to have plaid

the fool; it is but the best end of a bad business; a hard shift, and a desperate hazard, which a Man that had acted prudently would never have been put to; it is a Plaster after we have dangerously wounded our selves: but certainly it had been much wiser, to have prevented the danger of the wound, and the pain of curing it. A wise Man would not make himself sick if he could, or if he were already so, would not make himself sicker, tho' he had the most Effectual and Infallible Remedy in the world in his power: But this is not the case of a sinner, for Repentance as well as Faith is the gift of God.

VI.

Above all, let me caution you, not to put off this great and necessary work, to the most unseasonable time of all other, the time of sickness and death, upon a fond presumption, that you can be reconciled to God when you please, and exercise such a Repentance as will make your peace with him at any time.

I am heartily afraid, that a very great part of Mankind do miscarry upon

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upon this confidence, and are fwallowed up in the gulf of Eternal Perdition, with this Plank in their Arms. The common Cuſtom is (and I fear it is too common) when the Phyſician hath given over his Patient, then, and not till then, to ſend for the Miniſter; not ſo much to enquire into the Man's condition, and to give him ſuitable Advice, as to Miniſter comfort, and to ſpeak Peace to him at a venture. Serm. 4.

But let me tell you, that herein you put an extream difficult task upon us, in expecting that we ſhould pour Wine and Oyl into the wound before it be ſearched, and ſpeak ſmooth and comfortable things to a Man, that is but juſt brought to a ſenſe of the long courſe of a lewd and wicked Life, impenitently continued in. Alas! what comfort can we give to men in ſuch a caſe? We are loth to drive them to deſpair; and yet we muſt not deſtroy them by preſumption; pity and good nature do ſtrongly tempt us to make the beſt of their caſe, and to give them all the little hopes, which with any kind of Rea-

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ſon we can, and God knows it is but very little that we can give to ſuch Perſons upon good ground; for it all depends upon the degree and ſincerity of their Repentance, which God only knows, and we can but gueſs at. We can eaſily tell them what they ought to have done, and what they ſhould do, if they were to live longer, and what is the beſt that they can do in thoſe ſtraights into which they have brought themſelves, *viz.* to exerciſe as deep a Sorrow and Repentance for their ſins as is poſſible, and *to cry mightily to God* for Mercy, in and through the Merit of our Bleſſed Saviour. But how far this will be available in theſe Circumſtances we cannot tell; becauſe we do not know, whether if the Man had lived longer, this Repentance and theſe Reſolutions which he now declares of a better courſe, would have been good.

And after all is done that can be done in ſo ſhort a time, and in ſuch Circumſtances of confuſion and diſorder, as commonly attend dying Perſons, I doubt the reſult of all will be this; that there is much more ground of

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of fear than hope concerning them; nay perhaps, while we are preſſing the dying ſinner to Repentance, and he is bungling about it, he expires in great doubt and perplexity of mind what will become of him; or if his Eyes be cloſed with more comfortable hopes of his condition, the next time he opens them again, he may find his fearful miſtake, like the rich Man in the Parable, who when he was *in hell, lift up his eyes being in torment.*

This is a very diſmal and melancholy conſideration, and commands all men preſently to repent, and not to put off the main work of their lives to the end of them, and the time of ſickneſs and old Age. Let us not offer up a Carcaſs to God inſtead of a living and acceptable Sacrifice: but let us turn to God, in the days of our health and ſtrength, *before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, of which we ſhall ſay we have no pleaſure in them; before the Sun and the Moon and the Stars be darkned.* As *Solomon* elegantly expreſſeth it, *Eccl.* 12. 1, 2. before all the Comforts of Life be gone, before our Faculties be all ceaſed and

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ſpent, before our Underſtandings be too weak, and our Wills too ſtrong; our Underſtandings be too weak for conſideration, and the deliberate exerciſe of Repentance, and our Wills too ſtrong and ſtiff to be bent and bowed to it.

Let us not deceive our ſelves, Heaven is not an Hoſpital made to receive all Sick and Aged Perſons, that can but put up a faint requeſt to be admitted there; no, no, they are never like to *ſee the Kingdom of God*, who inſtead of *ſeeking it in the firſt place*, make it their *laſt refuge and retreat*, and when they find the Sentence of Death upon them, only to avoid preſent Execution, do bethink themſelves of getting to Heaven, and ſince there is no other Remedy, are contented to Petition the great King and Judge of the World, that they may be *tranſported* thither.

Upon all theſe Conſiderations, let us uſe no delay in a matter of ſuch mighty conſequence to our eternal Happineſs, but let the *counſel* which was given to *Nebuchadnezzar be acceptable to us*; let us *Break off our ſins by righteouſneſs, and our iniquities by ſhewing mercy*

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to the poor; if so be it may be a lengthning of our tranquillity. Repentance and Alms do well together; let us *break off our sins by righteousness and our iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor*; especially upon this great occasion, which his Majesty's great Goodness to those distressed Strangers, that have taken Sanctuary among us, hath lately presented us withal, *remembring that we also are in the body*, and liable to the like sufferings; and considering on the one hand, that Gracious promise of our Lord, *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy*; and on the other hand, that terrible threatning in St. *James*, *He shall have Judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy.* Serm. 4.

To conclude, from all that hath been said, let us take up a present Resolution of a better course, and enter immediately upon it, *to day whilst it is called to day, lest any of you be hardned through the deceitfulness of sin. O that men were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end. And grant we beseech the Almighty God, that we may all know and do, in this our day, the things which belong to our peace,*

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Vol. 8. *for thy mercy's ſake in Jeſus Chriſt, To whom with thee O Father and the Holy Ghoſt, be all Honour and Glory now and for ever.* Amen.

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SERMON V.

The Shamefulneſs of Sin, an Argument for Repentance.

The Firſt Sermon on this Text.

ROM. VI. 21, 22.

What fruit had ye then in thoſe things, whereof ye are now aſhamed? For the end of thoſe things is death. But now being made free from ſin, and become Servants to God, ye have your fruit unto Holineſs, and the end Everlaſting Life.

THERE are two Paſſions which do always in ſome Degree or other accompany a true Repentance, *viz.* Sorrow and Shame for our Sins; becauſe

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becauſe theſe are neceſſary to engage men to a Reſolution of making that change wherein Repentance does conſiſt: For till we are heartily ſorry for what we have done, and aſhamed of the evil of it, it is not likely that we ſhould ever come to a firm and ſteady purpoſe of forſaking our evil ways, and betaking our ſelves to a better courſe.

And theſe two Paſſions of Sorrow and Shame for our Sins, were wont anciently to be ſignified by thoſe outward expreſſions of Humiliation and Repentance, which we find ſo frequently mentioned in Scripture, of *being cloathed in Sackcloath* as a teſtimony of our ſorrow and mourning for our Sins, and of *being ſprinkled upon the head, and covered over with filth and dirt, with duſt and aſhes*, in token of our ſhame and confuſion of Face for all our Iniquities and tranſgreſſions. Hence are thoſe Expreſſions in Scripture of *Repenting in Sackcloath and Aſhes, of lying down in our ſhame*, and *being cover'd with confuſion*, in token of their great ſorrow and ſhame for the manifold

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manifold and heinous Sins, which they had been guilty of. Serm. 5.

Of the former of these, *viz.* Trouble and Sorrow for our Sins, I have very lately *treated; and of the latter, I intend now by God's assistance to speak, *viz.* Shame for our Sins, and that from these Words which I have recited to you; *What fruit had ye then in those things*, &c. In which Words the Apostle makes a comparison between an Holy and Virtuous, and a Sinful and Vicious course of Life, and sets before us a perfect enumeration of the manifest Inconveniences of the one, and the manifold Advantages of the other. *Ser. 3.

First, The manifest Inconveniences of a Vicious and Sinful course; and the Apostle mentions these *three*.

I. It is unprofitable, it brings no manner of present Benefit and Advantage to us, if all things be rightly calculated and consider'd. *What fruit had ye then in those things? Then* (*i. e.*) at the time when you committed those Sins, had you any present Advantage by

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Vol. 8. by them? No, certainly; but quite contrary.

II. The reflection upon our Sins afterwards is cauſe of ſhame and confuſion to us; *What fruit had you then in thoſe things, whereof ye are now aſhamed?*

III. The final iſſue and conſequence of theſe things is very diſmal and miſerable; *The end of thoſe things is death.* Let us put theſe things together, and ſee what they amount to: No Fruit then when ye did theſe things, and ſhame now when ye come afterwards to reflect upon them, and death and miſery at the laſt.

Secondly, Here is likewiſe on the other hand repreſented to us the manifold Benefit of an Holy and Virtuous Life. And that upon theſe *two* accounts.

I. Of the preſent Benefit of it, which the Apoſtle calls here *fruit*; *Ye have your fruit unto Holineſs.*

II. In

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Serm. 5.

II. In respect of the future Reward of it; *And the end Everlasting Life.* Here is a considerable Earnest in hand, and a mighty Recompence afterwards, infinitely beyond the proportion of our best Actions and Services, both in respect of the greatness and the duration of it, *Everlasting Life*; for a few transient and very imperfect actions of obedience, a perfect and immutable and endless state of Happiness. I shall begin with the

First, of the *two* general Heads. *viz.* The manifest Inconveniences of a Sinful and Vicious course; and the Apostle I told you in the Text takes notice of *three.*

I. It is unprofitable, and if all things be rightly calculated and consider'd, it brings no manner of present Advantage and Benefit to us. *What fruit had ye then in those things? Then, (i. e.)* When ye committed those Sins, had you any present Advantage by them? No certainly, quite the contrary; as if the Apostle had said, if you seriously reflect upon your former course of

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Vol. 8. of Impiety and Sin, wherein you have continued ſo long, you cannot but acknowledge that it brought no manner of advantage to you; and when all accounts are truly caſt up, you muſt, if you will confeſs the Truth, own that you were in no ſort gainers by it: For the words are a μειωσις, and the Apoſtle plainly intends more than he expreſſeth, *What fruit had ye then in thoſe things? (i. e.)* The wicked courſe which ye formerly lived in, was ſo far from being any ways Beneficial to you, that it was on the contrary upon all accounts extreamly to your prejudice and diſadvantage.

And this is not only true in reſpect of the final Iſſue and Conſequence of a Sinful and Vicious courſe of Life, that no Man is a gainer by it at the long run, and if we take into our conſideration another World, and the dreadful and endleſs miſery which a wicked and impenitent Life will then plunge men into, (which in the farther handling of this Text will at large be ſpoken to, being the laſt of the *three* Particulars under this *Firſt* general head:) But it is true likewiſe, even

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even in reſpect of this World, and with regard only to this preſent and temporal Life, without looking ſo far as the future Recompence and Puniſhment of Sin in another World. Serm. 5.

And this would plainly appear, by an Induction of theſe *three* Particulars.

1. It is Evident that ſome Sins are plainly miſchievous to the temporal Intereſt of men, as tending either to the diſturbance of their minds, or the endangering of their Health and Lives, or to the prejudice of their Eſtates, or the blaſting of them in their Reputation and good name.

2. That there are other Sins, which tho' they are not ſo viſibly burdened and attended with miſchievous Conſequences, yet are they plainly unprofitable, and bring no manner of real Advantage to men, either in reſpect of gain or pleaſure; ſuch are the Sins of Profaneneſs, and cuſtomary Swearing in common Converſation.

3. That

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3. That even thoſe Sins and Vices, which make the faireſt pretence to be of Advantage to us, when all Accounts are caſt up, and all Circumſtances duly weigh'd and conſider'd, will be found to be but pretenders, and in no degree able to perform and make good what they ſo largely promiſe before hand, when they tempt us to the commiſſion of them. There are ſome Vices, which pretend to bring in great profit, and tempt worldly-minded men, whoſe minds are diſpoſed to catch at that bait; ſuch are the Sins of Covetouſneſs and Oppreſſion, of Fraud and Falſhood and Perfidiouſneſs. And there are others which pretend to bring pleaſure along with them, which is almoſt an irreſiſtable temptation to voluptuous and ſenſual men; ſuch are the Sins of Revenge, and Intemperance, and Luſt. But upon a particular examination of each of theſe, it will evidently appear, that there is no ſuch profit or pleaſure in any of theſe Vices, as can be a reaſonable temptation to any Man to fall in love with them, and to engage in the Commiſſion and Practice of them. But I ſhall not now inlarge

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inlarge upon any of theſe, having lately diſcours'd upon them from another Text. I ſhall therefore proceed to the Serm. 5.

II. Inconvenience which I mentioned of a ſinful and vicious Courſe, *viz.* that the reflection upon our Sins afterwards, is cauſe of great Shame and Confuſion to us. *What fruit had you then in thoſe things, whereof you are now aſhamed?* And this is a very proper Argument for this Seaſon *; becauſe the Paſſion of Shame, as it is the natural and uſual conſequent of Sin, ſo it is a Diſpoſition neceſſarily required to a true Repentance.

* *Preach'd in Lent.*

Moſt Men when they commit a known Fault are apt to be aſhamed, and ready to bluſh, whenever they are put in mind of it, and charged with it. Some Perſons indeed have gone ſo far in Sin, and have waded ſo deep in a vicious courſe, as to be confirmed and harden'd in their Wickedneſs to that degree, as to be paſt all Shame, and almoſt all ſenſe of their Faults; eſpecially in regard of the more common and ordinary Vices,

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which are in vogue and faſhion, and in the commiſſion whereof they are countenanc'd and encourag'd by Company and Example. Such were thoſe of whom the Prophet ſpeaks, *Jer.* 6. 15. *Were they aſhamed, when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not aſhamed, neither could they bluſh.*

But yet even theſe Perſons, when they come to be ſenſible of their guilt, ſo as to be brought to Repentance, they cannot then but be aſhamed of what they have done. For what face ſoever Men may ſet upon their Vices, Sin is ſhameful in it ſelf, and ſo apt to fill Men with *confuſion of face*, when they ſeriouſly reflect upon it, that they cannot harden their Foreheads againſt all ſenſe of Shame. And whatever Men may declare to the contrary, this is tacitly acknowledged by the generality of Men; in that they are ſo ſolicitous and careful to conceal their Faults from the Eyes of others, and to keep them as ſecret as they can; and whenever they are diſcovered, and laid open, 'tis matter of great Trouble and Confuſion to them; and if any one happen to upbraid and twit

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twit them with their Miscarriages of any kind, they cannot bear with Patience to hear of them. Serm. 4.

There are indeed some few such Prodigies and Monsters of Men, as are able after great struglings with their Consciences, to force themselves to boast impudently of their Wickedness, and *to glory in their shame*; not because they do really and inwardly believe their Vices to be an Honour and Glory to them, but because conscious to themselves that they have done shameful things, and believing that others know it, they put on *a Whore's Forehead*, and think to prevent the upbraiding of others, by owning what they have done, and seeming to glory in it: but yet for all that, these Persons, if they would confess the Truth, do feel some Confusion in themselves, and they are inwardly sensible of the Infamy and Reproach of such Actions, for all they would seem to the World to bear it out so well: For when all is done, there is a wide difference between the Impudence of a Criminal, and the Confidence and Assurance of a clear Conscience, that is fully satisfied

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Vol. 8. of its own Innocence and Integrity. The conſcientious Man is not aſhamed of any thing that he hath done: but the impudent Sinner only ſeems not to be ſo, but all the while feels a great deal of Confuſion in his own Mind. The one is ſenſible and ſatisfied that there is no cauſe for Shame: the other is conſcious to himſelf that there is cauſe, but he offers Violence to himſelf, and ſuppreſſes all he can the ſenſe and ſhew of it, and will needs face down the World, that he hath no Guilt and Regret in his own Mind for any thing that he hath done.

Now that Sin is truly matter of Shame, will be very evident, if we conſider theſe *two* things.

Firſt, If we conſider the nature of this Paſſion of Shame.

Secondly, If we conſider what there is in Sin, which gives real ground and occaſion for it.

Firſt, For the nature of this Paſſion. Shame is the Trouble or Confuſion of Mind, occaſioned by ſomething that tends

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tends to our Diſgrace and Diſhonour, to our Infamy and Reproach. Now there is nothing truly and really matter of Shame and Reproach to us, but what we our ſelves have done, or have been ſome way or other acceſſary to the doing of, by our own fault or neglect, and by conſequence what it was in our Power and Choice not to have done: For no Man is aſhamed of what he is ſure he could not help. Neceſſity, unleſs it be wilful and contracted, and happens through ſome precedent occaſion and fault of our own, does take away all juſt cauſe of Shame. Serm. 5.

And nothing likewiſe is matter of Shame, but ſomething which we ought not to do, which misbecomes us, and is below the Dignity and Perfection of our Nature, and is againſt ſome Duty and Obligation that is upon us to the contrary; and conſequently is a Reproach to our Reaſon and Underſtanding, a Reflection upon our Prudence and Diſcretion, and at firſt ſight hath an appearance of Ruggedneſs and Deformity.

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And all Actions of this nature do receive ſeveral Aggravations, with reſpect to the Perſons againſt whom, and in whoſe Preſence, and under whoſe Eye and Knowledge theſe ſhameful things are done. Now I ſhall ſhew in the

Second place, That Sin contains in it whatſoever is juſtly accounted infamous, together with all the Aggravations of Shame and Reproach that can be imagined. And this will appear by conſidering Sin and Vice in theſe *two* reſpects;

I. In relation to our ſelves.

II. In reſpect to God, againſt whom, and in whoſe ſight it is committed.

I. In relation to our ſelves, there are theſe *four* things which make Sin and Vice to be very ſhameful.

1. The natural Ruggedneſs and Deformity of it.

2. That

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Serm. 4.

2. That it is ſo great a Diſhonour to our Nature, and to the Dignity and Excellency of our Being.

3. That it is ſo great a Reproach to our Reaſon and Underſtanding, and ſo foul a Reflection upon our Prudence and Diſcretion.

4. That it is our own voluntary Act and Choice.

Every one of theſe Conſiderations render it very ſhameful, and all of them together ought to fill the Sinner with *Confuſion of face.* I ſhall ſpeak to them ſeverally.

1. The natural Ruggedneſs and Deformity of Sin and Vice render it very ſhameful. Men are apt to be aſhamed of any thing in them, or belonging to them, that looks ugly and monſtrous, and therefore they endeavour with great Care and Art to conceal and diſſemble their Deformity in any kind. How ſtrangely do we ſee Men concerned with all their Diligence and Skill, to cover and palliate any Defect or De-

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formity in their Bodies; an ill Face, if they could, however a foul and bad Complexion, or blind or ſquinting Eye, a crooked Body or Limb, and whatever is ill-favour'd or monſtrous. Now in regard of our Souls and better part, Sin hath all the monſtrouſneſs and deformity in it, which we can imagine in the Body, and much more; and it is as hard to be covered from the Eye of diſcerning Men, as the deformity of the Body is; but impoſſible to be conceal'd from the Eye of God, to whom *Darkneſs and Light*, ſecret and open are all one. But then the moral Defects and Deformities of the Mind have this advantage above the natural Defects and Deformities of the Body, that the former are poſſible to be cured by the Grace of God, in Conjunction with our own Care and Endeavour: Whereas no Diligence or Skill can ever help or remove many of the natural Defects and Deformities of the Body.

Sin is the blindneſs of our Minds, the perverſeneſs and crookedneſs of our Wills, and the monſtrous irregularity and diſorder of our Affections and

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and Appetites; it is the mis-placing of our Powers and Faculties, the setting of our Wills and Passions above our Reason; all which is ugly and unnatural, and, if we were truly sensible of it, matter of great Shame and Reproach to us. Serm. 5.

There is hardly any Vice, but at first sight hath an odious and ugly Appearance to a well disciplin'd and innocent Mind, that hath never had any acquaintance with it. And however Familiarity and Custom may abate the sense of it's Deformity, yet it is at it was before, and the change that is made in us, does not alter the nature of the thing. Drunkenness and furious Passion, Pride and Fashood, Covetousness and Cruelty, are odious, and matter of Shame, in the sincere and uncorrupted Opinion of all Mankind. And tho' a Man, by the frequent Practice of any of these Vices, and a long familiarity with them, may not be so sensible of the Deformity of them in himself, yet he quickly discerns the ugliness of them in others, when ever they come in his way, and could with Salt and Sharpness

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neſs enough upbraid thoſe whom he ſees guilty of them, but that he is inwardly conſcious, that the Reproach may be ſo eaſily return'd, and thrown back upon himſelf. However this is a natural acknowledgment of the Deformity and Shamefulneſs of Sin and Vice.

2. They are likewiſe ſhameful, becauſe they are ſo great a Diſhonour to our Nature, and to the Dignity and Excellency of our Being. We go below our ſelves, and act beneath the Dignity of our Nature, when we do any thing contrary to the Rules and Laws of it, or to the revealed Will of God; becauſe theſe are the Bounds and Limits which God and Nature hath ſet to Humane Actions; and are the meaſures of our Duty, *i. e.* what is fit and becoming for us to do, and what not. So that all Sin and Vice is baſe and unworthy, and beneath the Dignity of our Nature; it argues a corrupt and diſeaſed Conſtitution and Habit of Mind, a crooked and perverſe Diſpoſition of Will, and a ſordid and mean temper of Spirit.

And

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And therefore the Scripture doth frequently represent a state of Sin and Wickedness, by that which is accounted the basest and meanest Condition among Men, by a state of Servitude and Slavery, especially if it had been our Choice, or the evident and necessary Consequence of our wilful Fault: For we do as bad as chuse it, when we wilfully bring it upon our selves. So that to be a Sinner, is to be a Slave to some vile Lust, Appetite, or Passion, to some unnatural or irregular Desire; it is to sell our selves into Bondage, and to part with one of the most valuable things in the World, our Liberty, upon low and unworthy terms. Such a State and Condition does unavoidably debase and debauch our Minds, and break the force and firmness of our Spirits, and robs us, as *Dalilah* did *Sampson*, of our Strength and Courage, of our Resolution and Constancy; so that Men have not the Heart left to design and endeavour in good earnest their own Rescue out of this mean and miserable estate, into which by their own Folly and Fault they have brought themselves. Serm. 5.

When

When Men are engaged into a cuſtom of ſinning, and have habituated themſelves to any vicious Courſe, how do they betray their Weakneſs and want of Reſolution, by being at the beck of every fooliſh Luſt, and by ſuffering themſelves to be commanded and hurried away by every unruly Appetite and Paſſion, to do things which they know to be greatly to their Harm and Prejudice, and which they are convinced are mean and ſordid things, and ſuch as they are aſhamed that any wiſe Man ſhould ſee them doing! And there is no greater Argument of a pitiful and degenerate Spirit, than to commit ſuch things as a Man would bluſh to be ſurprized in, and would be mightily troubled to hear of afterwards. And which is more, after he hath been convinc'd by manifold Experience, that they are a Shame and Diſgrace to him, and make him to hang down his Head, and let fall his Countenance, whenever he is in better Company than himſelf; yet after this to go and do the ſame things again, which he is ſenſible are ſo ſhameful, and to be ſo impotent, and

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and to have ſo little Command of himſelf, as not to be able to free himſelf from this Bondage, nor the heart to pray to God that by his Grace he would enable him hereto. Serm. 5.

And that Sin is of this ſhameful Nature, is evident, in that the greateſt part of Sinners take ſo much Care and Pains to hide their Vices from the ſight and notice of Men, and to this purpoſe chuſe Darkneſs and ſecret places of Retirement to commit their Sins in. The Apoſtle takes notice, that thus much Modeſty was left even in a very wicked and degenerate Age, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 7. *They that be drunk* (ſays he) *are drunk in the night.* Now all this is a plain acknowledgment, that Sin is a ſpurious and degenerate thing, that it misbecomes Humane Nature, and is below the Dignity of a reaſonable Creature: Otherwiſe why ſhould Men be ſo ſolicitous and concern'd to cover their Faults from the ſight of others? If they are not aſhamed of them, why do they not bring them into the broad Light, and ſhew them openly, if they think they will endure it?

So

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So true is that Obſervation which *Plato* makes, That tho' a Man were ſure that God would forgive his Sins, and that Men ſhould never know them, yet there is that Baſeneſs in Sin, that a wiſe Man, that conſiders what it is, would bluſh to himſelf alone to be guilty of it; and tho' he were not afraid of the Puniſhment, would be aſhamed of the Turpitude and Deformity of it.

Did but a Man conſider ſeriouſly with himſelf, how mean and unmanly it is for a Man to be drunk; and what an apiſh and ridiculous thing he renders himſelf to all ſober Men that behold him, and with what Contempt and Scorn they entertain ſuch a ſight; and how brutiſh it is to wallow in any unlawful Luſt, and how much a Man deſcends and ſtoops beneath himſelf; what ſhameful Fear and Cowardiſe he betrays when he is frighted to tell a Lye out of Fear, or tempted thereto for ſome little Advantage; and yet is ſo inconſiſtent with himſelf, as to have, or to pretend to have the Courage to fight any Man,

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Man, that shall tell him so sawcy a Truth, as that he told a Lye. Serm. 5.

Would but a Man think before hand, how unworthy, and how unequal a thing it is, to defraud or cheat his Brother; or to do any thing to another Man, which he would be loth in the like case that he should do to him; how base a thing it is, for a Man to be perfidious and false to his Promise or Trust; how monstrous to be unthankful to one that hath highly obliged him, and every way and upon all occasions deserved well at his Hands; and so I might instance in all other sorts of Sins; I say, he that considers this well and wisely, tho' there were no Law against Sin, and (if it were a possible case, and fit to be supposed) tho' there were no such Being as God in the World, to call him to account and punish him for it, yet out of meer Generosity and Greatness of Mind, out of pure respect to himself, and the Dignity and Rank of his Being, and of his Order in the World, out of very Reverence to Humane Nature, and the inward Perswasion of his own Mind, (however

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Vol. 8. ver he came by that Perſwaſion) concerning the Indeceny and Deformity and Shamefulneſs of the thing, I ſay, for theſe Reaſons, if there were no other, a Man would ſtrive with himſelf, with all his might, to refrain from Sin and Vice, and not only bluſh, but abhor to think of doing a wicked Action.

3. Sin will yet farther appear ſhameful, in that it is ſo great a Reproach to our Underſtandings and Reaſons, and ſo foul a Blot upon our Prudence and Diſcretion. *Omnis peccans aut ignorans eſt, aut incogitans,* is a Saying, I think, of one of the School-men; (as one would gueſs by the *Latin* of it) *Every Sinner is either an ignorant, or inconſiderate Perſon.* Either Men do not underſtand what they do, when they commit Sin; or if they do know, they do not actually attend to, and conſider what they know: Either they are habitually or actually ignorant of what they do: for Sin and Conſideration cannot dwell together; 'tis ſo very unreaſonable and abſurd a thing, that it requires either groſs Ignorance, or ſtupid Inadvertency, to make

make a Man capable of committing it. Whenever a Man sins, he must either be destitute of Reason, or must lay it aside or asleep for the time, and so suffer himself to be hurried away, and to act *brutishly*, as if *he had no understanding*. Serm. 5.

Did but Men attentively consider what it is to offend God, and to break the Laws of that great Law-giver, who *is able to save or to destroy*, they would discern so many invincible Objections against the thing, and would be filled with such strong Fears and Jealousies of the fatal Issue and Event of it, that they would not dare to venture upon it. And therefore we find the Scripture so frequently resolving the Wickedness of Men into their Ignorance and Inconsiderateness, *Psal.* 14. 4. *Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?* intimating that by their Actions one would judge so. And the same account God himself also gives elsewhere of the frequent Disobedience and Rebellion of the People of *Israel*, *Deut.* 32. 28, 29.

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Vol. 8. *They are a nation void of counſel, neither is there any underſtanding in them. Oh! that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this, that they would conſider their latter end!* Knowledge and Conſideration would cure a great part of the Wickedneſs that is in the World; Men would not *commit Sin with* ſo much *greedineſs*, would they but take time to conſider, and bethink themſelves what they do.

Have we not reaſon then to be aſhamed of Sin, which caſts ſuch a reproach of Ignorance and Raſhneſs upon us? and of Imprudence likewiſe and Indiſcretion? Since nothing can be more directly and plainly againſt our greateſt and beſt Intereſt both of Body and Soul, both here and hereafter, both now and to all Eternity. And there is nothing that Men are more aſhamed of, than to be guilty of ſo great an Imprudence, as to act clearly againſt their own Intereſt, to which Sin is the moſt plainly croſs and contrary, that it is poſſible for any thing to be. No Man can engage

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engage and continue in a sinful Course, without being so far abused and infatuated, as to be contented to part with Everlasting Happiness, and to be undone and miserable for ever; none but he that can perswade himself against all the Reason and Sense of Mankind, that there is pleasure enough in the transient acts of Sin, to make amends for Eternal Sorrow, and Shame, and Suffering. And can such a Thought as this enter into the Heart of a considerate Man? *Epicurus* was so wise, as to conclude against all Pleasure that would give a Man more Trouble and Disturbance afterwards; against all Pleasures that had Pain and Grief consequent upon them; and he forbids his Wise Man to taste of them, or to meddle with them; and had he believed any thing of a future State, he must, according to his Principle, have pronounc'd it the greatest Folly that could be, for any Man to purchase the Pleasures and Happiness of a few Years, at the dear rate of Eternal Misery

Serm. 5.

Vol. 8. ry and Torment. So that if it be a Diſgrace to a Man to act imprudently, and to do things plainly againſt his Intereſt, then Vice is the greateſt reproach that is poſſible.

The *4th* and *laſt* Conſideration, which renders Sin ſo ſhameful to us, is, that it is our own Voluntary Act and Choice. We chuſe this Diſgrace and willingly bring this Reproach upon our ſelves. We pity an Ideot, and one that is naturally deſtitute of Underſtanding, or one that loſeth the uſe of his Reaſon by a Diſeaſe or other inevitable accident: But every one deſpiſeth him who beſots himſelf, and plays the fool out of careleſsneſs and a groſs neglect of himſelf. And this is the Caſe of the Sinner; there is no Man that ſinneth, but becauſe he is wanting to himſelf; he might be wiſer and do better, and will not; but he chuſeth his own Devices, and Voluntarily runs himſelf upon thoſe incon-

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inconveniences, which it was in his Power to have avoided. Serm. 5.

Not but that I do heartily own and lament the great Corruption and Degeneracy of our Nature, and the ſtrong Propenſions which appear ſo early in us to that which is Evil: but God hath provided a Remedy and Cure for all this: For ſince *the Grace of God, which brings Salvation unto all men, hath appeared,* under the influence and through the aſſiſtance of that Grace, which is offer'd to them by the Goſpel, men may *deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent World.* For I make no doubt, but ſince God hath enter'd into a new Covenant of Grace with Mankind, and offered new Terms of Life and Salvation to us, I ſay I doubt not, but his Grace is ready at hand, to enable us to perform all thoſe Conditions which he requires of us, if we be not wanting to our ſelves.

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There was a way of Salvation established, before the Gospel was clearly reveal'd to the World, and they who under that Dispensation, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, sincerely endeavour'd to do the will of God, so far as they knew it, were not utterly destitute of Divine Grace and Assistance: But now there is a more plentiful Effusion of God's Grace and Holy Spirit; so that whoever under the Gospel sins deliberately, sins wilfully, and is wicked, not for want of Power but of Will to do otherwise. And this is that which makes Sin so shameful a thing, and so very reproachful to us, that we destroy our selves by our own folly and neglect of our selves, and become miserable by our own choice; and when the Grace of God hath put it into our Power to be wise and to be happy.

I should now have proceeded to the *Second* thing I propos'd, which was to consider Sin in relation to God,

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God, and to ſhew that it is no leſs ſhameful in that reſpect, than I have ſhewn it to be with regard to our ſelves: But this I ſhall refer to another oportunity. Serm. 5.

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SERMON VI.

The Shamefulneſs of Sin, an Argument for Repentance.

The Second Sermon on this Text.

ROM. VI. 21, 22.

What fruit had ye then in thoſe things, whereof ye are now aſhamed? For the end of thoſe things is death. But now being made free from ſin, and become Servants to God, ye have your fruit unto Holineſs, and the end Everlaſting Life.

IN theſe words the Apoſtle makes a compariſon, between an Holy and Virtuous, and a Sinful and Vicious courſe of Life, and ſets before us a perfect

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perfect enumeration of the manifest inconveniences of the one, and the manifold advantages of the other.

I began with the *First* of these, *viz.* to shew the manifest inconveniences of a sinful and vicious course. I am upon the *Second* inconvenience of a sinful course, *viz.* That the reflection upon it afterwards is cause of great Shame and *Confusion of face* to us; and that

First, in Relation to our selves. Which I have dispatch'd, and proceed now in the,

Second Place, to consider Sin in respect of God, against whom, and in whose sight and presence it is committed; and upon examination it will appear, to be no less shameful in this respect than the other.

There are some Persons before whom we are more apt to be ashamed and blush, than before others; as those whom we reverence, those to whom we are greatly oblig'd, and those who are clear of those faults which we are guilty

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guilty of; and those who hate or greatly dislike what we do; especially if they be present with us, and in our company; if they stand by us and observe, and take notice of what we do, and are likely to publish our folly and make it known, and have Authority and Power to punish us for our faults; we are ashamed to have done any thing that is vile and unworthy before such Persons. Now to render Sin the more Shameful, God may be consider'd by us under all these Notions, and in all these respects. Serm. 6.

1. Whenever we commit any Sin, we do it before him, in his presence, and under his eye and knowledge, to whom of all persons in the world we ought to pay the most profound reverence. I remember *Seneca* somewhere says; that "There are some "Persons, *quorum interventu perditi* "*quoque homines vitia supprimerent*, "that are so awful and so generally "reverenc'd for the eminency of their "Virtues, that even the most profli- "gate and impudent sinners will en- "deavour to suppress their Vices, and "refrain from any thing that is notoriously

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"rioufly bad, and uncomely, whilſt "ſuch Perſons ſtand by them, and are "in preſence. Such an one was *Cato* among the *Romans*. The People of *Rome* had ſuch a Regard and Reverence for him, that if he appeared, they would not begin or continue their uſual ſports, till he was withdrawn from the Theatre, thinking them too light to be acted before a Perſon of his Gravity and Virtue: And if they were ſo much aw'd by the preſence of a Wife and a Virtuous Man, that they were aſhamed to do any thing that was unſeemly before him; how much more ſhould the preſence of the Holy God, who is *of purer eyes, than to behold iniquity*, make us bluſh to do any thing that is lewd and vile in his ſight, and fill us with ſhame and *confuſion of face* at the thoughts of it? Now whenever we commit any Sin, God looks upon us; and he alone is an ample Theatre indeed. That he obſerves what we do, ought to be more to us, than if the Eyes of all the World beſides were gazing upon us.

2. He

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Serm. 6.

2. He likewiſe is incomparably our greateſt Benefactour, and there is no Perſon in the World, to whom in any degree we ſtand ſo much oblig'd, as to him; and from whom we can expect and hope for ſo much good, as from him; the conſideration whereof muſt make us aſhamed, ſo often as we conſider, and are conſcious to our ſelves, that we have done any thing that is grievous and diſpleaſing to him.

We are wont to have a more peculiar Reverence for thoſe to whom we are exceedingly beholden, and to be much aſhamed to do any thing before them, which may ſignifie diſreſpect, and much more enmity againſt them; becauſe this would be horrible ingratitude, one of the moſt odious and ſhameful of all Vices. And is there any one to whom we can ſtand more obliged, than to him that made us, than to the Author and Founder of our Beings, and the great Patron and Preſerver of our lives? And can there then be any before whom, and againſt whom we ſhould be more aſhamed to offend?

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Vol. 8. offend? When the Prodigal in the Parable would ſet forth the ſhamefulneſs of his Miſcarriage, he aggravates it from hence, that he had offended againſt and before one to whom he had been ſo infinitely obliged. *Father*, ſays he, *I have ſinned againſt heaven and in thy ſight.*

3. We are aſhamed likewiſe to be guilty of any fault or crime before thoſe Perſons who are clear of it, or of any thing of the like nature themſelves. Men are not apt to be aſhamed before thoſe who are their fellow-Criminals, and involved with them in the ſame guilt, becauſe they do not ſtand in awe of them, nor can have any reverence for them. Thoſe, who are equally guilty, muſt bear with one another. We are not apt to fear the cenſures and reproofs of thoſe, who are as bad as our ſelves: but we are aſhamed to do a foul and unworthy Action, before thoſe who are innocent and free from the ſame, or the like Sins and Vices which we are guilty of.

Now whenever we commit any Sin, it is in the preſence of the Holy God, who

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who hath no part with us in our crimes, whose nature is removed at the farthest distance from Sin, and is as contrary to it as can be. *There is no iniquity with the Lord our God.* And therefore of all Persons in the World we should blush to be guilty of it before him. Serm. 6.

4. We are apt also to be ashamed to do any thing before those who dislike and detest what we do. To do a wicked Action before those who are not offended at it, or perhaps take pleasure in it, is no such matter of shame to us. Now of all others, God is the greatest hater of Sin, and the most perfect Enemy to it in the whole World. *Hab.* 1. 13. *Thou art of purer eyes, than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity, i. e.* with patience, and without an infinite hatred and abhorrence of it. Such is the unspotted Purity and Perfection of the Divine Nature, that it is not possible that God should give the least countenance to any thing that is Evil. Psal. 5. 4, 5. *Thou art not a God,* says *David* there to him, *that hast Pleasure in iniquity, neither shall evil dwell with thee: The wicked shall*

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Vol. 8. *ſhall not ſtand in thy ſight; thou hateſt all the workers of iniquity.*

5. We are aſhamed likewiſe to do any thing that is Evil and unſeemly before thoſe, who we are afraid will publiſh our faults to others, and will make known and expoſe the folly of them. Now whenever we Sin, it is before him who will moſt certainly one day bring all our works of darkneſs into the open light, and expoſe all our ſecret deeds of diſhoneſty upon the publick Stage of the World, and make all the vileſt of our actions known, and lay them open, with all the ſhameful Circumſtances of them, before men and Angels, to our everlaſting Shame and Confuſion. This is the meaning of that Proverbial Speech, ſo often uſed by our Saviour, *There is nothing cover'd, that ſhall not be revealed, neither hid that ſhall not be made manifeſt.* All the Sins which we now commit with ſo much caution, in ſecret and dark retirements, ſhall in that great day of Revelation, when the ſecrets of all hearts ſhall be diſcloſed, be ſet in open view, and in ſo full and ſtrong a light, that all the World ſhall ſee them; and

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and that which was plotted and contrived in so much secrecy, and hardly whisper'd in this World, shall then *be proclaimed aloud*, and as it were *upon the House-tops.* Serm. 6.

6. and *Lastly*, We are ashamed and afraid to commit a fault before those, who we believe will call us to an account for it, and Punish us severely. A Man may suffer innocently and for a good Cause; but all suffering in that case, is by wise and good men esteemed honourable and glorious, and tho' we are Condemned by men, we are acquitted in our own Consciences: But that which is properly called Punishment is always attended with Infamy and Reproach; because it always supposeth some fault and crime, as the ground and reason of it. Hence it is that in this World, men are not only afraid, but ashamed to commit any fault before those, who they think have Authority and Power to punish it. He is an impudent Villain indeed, that will venture to cut a Purse in the presence of the Judge.

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Now when ever we commit any Wickedneſs, we do it under the Eye of the great Judge of the World, who ſtedfaſtly beholds us, and whoſe Omnipotent Juſtice ſtands by us ready armed and charged for our Deſtruction, and can in a moment cut us off. Every ſin that we are guilty of, in thought, word, or deed, is all in the preſence of the Holy, and Juſt, and Powerful God; whoſe Power enables him, and whoſe Holineſs and Juſtice will effectually engage him, one time or other, if a timely Repentance doth not prevent it, to inflict a terrible Puniſhment upon all the Workers of iniquity.

You ſee then by all that hath been ſaid upon this Argument, how ſhameful a thing ſin is, and what *Confuſion of face* the reflection upon our wicked Lives ought to cauſe in all of us. *What fruit had ye then in thoſe things, whereof ye are now aſhamed?* If ever we be brought to true Repentance for our ſins, it cannot but be matter of great Shame to us.

We

Serm. 6.

We find in Scripture that shame doth continually accompany Repentance, and is inseparable from it. This is one Mark and Character of a true Penitent, that he is ashamed of what he hath done. Thus *Ezra*, when he makes Confession of the sins of the People, he testifies and declares his Shame, for what they had done; *I said, O my God! I am ashamed and blush to lift up mine Eyes to thee my God; for our iniquities are increased over our Heads, and our trespasses are grown up to the Heavens*, Ezra 9. 6. And may not we of this Nation at this day take these words unto our selves, considering to what a strange height our sins are grown, and how iniquity abounds among us? So likewise the Prophet *Jeremiah*, when he would express the Repentance of the People of *Israel*, Jer. 3. 25. *We lye down* (says he) *in our shame, and our Confusion covereth us, because we have sinned against the Lord our God.* In like manner the Prophet *Daniel*, after he had in the Name of the People made an humble acknowledgment of their manifold and great Sins, he

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Vol. 8. takes ſhame to himſelf, and them for them. *Dan.* 9. 5. *We have ſinned,* ſays he, *and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled in departing from thy Precepts, and from thy Judgments. O Lord, righteouſneſs belongeth to thee; but unto us confuſion of face, as at this day; to the men of* Judah, *and to the inhabitants of* Jeruſalem, *and unto all* Iſrael, *that are near and that are far off, through all the Countries whither thou haſt driven them, becauſe of their treſpaſs, which they have treſpaſſed againſt thee: O Lord! To us belongeth confuſion of face, to our Kings, to our Princes, and to our Fathers, becauſe we have ſinned againſt thee.* By which we may judge, how conſiderable and eſſential a part of Repentance, this Holy Man eſteemed ſhame, for the ſins they had been guilty of, to be. And indeed upon all occaſions of ſolemn Repentance, and Humiliation for ſin, this taking ſhame for their ſins is hardly ever omitted, as if there could be no ſincere Confeſſion of ſin and Repentance for it, without teſtifying their *ſhame*, and *Confuſion of face*

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face upon the remembrance of their sins. Serm. 6.

Now to stir up this affection of shame in us, let me offer to you these *three* Considerations.

I. Consider what great reason we have to be heartily ashamed of all the sins and offences which we have been guilty of against God. It was a good old Precept of Philosophy, *that we should reverence our selves*, i. e. that we should never do any thing, that should be matter of Shame and Reproach to us afterwards, nothing that misbecomes us, and is unworthy of us.

I have shewn at large, that all Sin and Vice is a dishonour to our Nature, and beneath the Dignity of it; that it is a great reproach to our Reason, and directly contrary to our true and best Interest; that it hath all the aggravating circumstances of Infamy and Shame; that every sin that was at any time committed by us, was done in the presence of one, whom of all Persons in the World

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we have moſt Reaſon to reverence, and againſt him, to whom of all others we ſtand moſt obliged for the greateſt Favours, for innumerable Benefits, for infinite Mercy and Patience and Forbearance towards us, in the preſence of the Holy and Juſt God, who is at the fartheſt diſtance from ſin, aud the greateſt and moſt implacable Enemy to it in the whole World, and who will one day puniſh all our faults, and expoſe us to open ſhame for them, who will *bring every work into judgment, and every ſecret ſin* that ever we committed, and take Vengeance upon us for all our iniquities. So that whenever we ſin, we ſhamefully entreat our ſelves, and give the deepeſt wounds to our Reputation in the eſteem of him, who is the moſt competent Judge of what is truly Honourable and Praiſe-worthy, and cloath our ſelves with ſhame and diſhonour.

We are aſhamed of Poverty, becauſe the poor Man is deſpiſed, and almoſt ridiculous in the Eye of the proud and covetous rich Man, *whoſe riches are his high Tower*, and make him

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him apt to look down upon the poor Man that is below him, with contempt and scorn; we are ashamed of a dangerous and contagious Disease, because all men fly infectious company: but a Man may be poor or sick by misfortune; but no Man is wicked, but by his own fault and wilful choice. Ill-natur'd and inconsiderate men will be apt to contemn us for our poverty and affliction in any kind: but by our Vices we render our selves odious to God, and to all good and considerate men. Serm. 6.

II. Consider that shame for sin now, is the way to prevent Eternal Shame and Confusion hereafter. For this is one great part of the Misery of another World, that the sinner shall then *be filled with everlasting shame* and *confusion* at the remembrance of his faults and folly. The Eternal Misery of wicked men is sometimes in Scripture represented, as if it consisted only or chiefly in the Infamy and Reproach which will then overwhelm them, when all their crimes and faults shall be exposed and laid open to the view of the whole

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Vol. 8. World. *Dan.* 12. 2. where the general Resurrection of the just and unjust is thus described; *Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life; and some to everlasting shame and contempt*: Where *everlasting life* and *everlasting shame* are opposed, as if Eternal shame were a kind of perpetual Death.

In this World sinners make an hard shift, by concealing or extenuating their faults, as well as they can, to suppress or lessen their shame; they have not now so clear and full Conviction of the evil and folly of their sin; God is pleased to bear with them and to spare them at present, and they do not yet feel the dismal effects and consequences of a wicked life: but in the next World, when *the righteous judgment of God is revealed*, and the full Vials of his wrath shall be poured forth upon sinners, they shall then *be cloathed with shame, as with a garment*, and *be covered with confusion*; then they will feel the folly of their sins, and have a sensible Demonstration within themselves of

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of the infinite Evil of them; their own Conſciences will then furiouſly fly in their faces, and with the greateſt bitterneſs and rage upbraid and reproach them with the folly of their own doings; and ſo long as we are ſenſible, that we ſuffer for our own folly, ſo long we muſt unavoidably be aſhamed of what we have done. So that if ſinners ſhall be everlaſtingly tormented in another World, it neceſſarily follows, that they ſhall be eternally Confounded. Serm. 6.

Is it not then better to remember our ways now, and to be aſhamed and repent of them, than to bring everlaſting Shame and Confuſion upon our ſelves, before God, and Angels, and Men? This is the Argument which St. *John* uſeth, to take men off from ſin, and to engage them to Holineſs and Righteouſneſs of Life. 1. *Joh.* 2. 28. *That when he ſhall appear*, that is, when he ſhall come to judge the World, *we may have confidence, and not be aſhamed before him at his coming.*

III. and

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III. And *laſtly*, Conſider that nothing ſets men at a farther diſtance from Repentance, and all hopes of their becoming better, and brings them nearer to Ruin, than Impudence in a ſinful courſe. There are too many in the World, who are ſo far from being aſhamed of their Wickedneſs, and bluſhing at the mention of their faults, that they boaſt of them, and glory in them. God often complains of this in the People of *Iſrael*, as a ſad preſage of their Ruin, and an ill ſign of their deſperate and irrecoverable Condition; *Jer.* 3. 3. *Thou hadſt a whore's forehead, and refuſedſt to be aſhamed*; and *Jerem.* 6. 15. *Were they aſhamed when they committed abominations? Nay, they were not aſhamed, neither could they bluſh: therefore they ſhall fall among them that fall, and in the time that I viſit them, they ſhall be caſt down.* Hear likewiſe how the Apoſtle doth lament the caſe of ſuch Perſons, as incurable and paſt all remedy. *Philip.* 3. 18, 19. *There are many of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are enemies to the Croſs of Chriſt,*

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Chriſt, whoſe end is deſtruction, whoſe God is their belly, whoſe glory is in their ſhame. Such Perſons who *glory* in that which ought to be *their ſhame*, what can their *end* be but *deſtruction?* Serm. 6.

There is certainly no greater argument of a degenerate Perſon, and of one that is utterly loſt to all ſenſe of goodneſs, than to be void of ſhame; and as on the one Hand, they muſt be very towardly, and well diſpoſs'd to Virtue, who are drawn by ingenuity, and meer ſenſe of Obligation and Kindneſs; ſo on the other hand, they muſt be very ſtupid and inſenſible, who are not wrought upon by Arguments of fear, and ſenſe of ſhame. There is hardly any hopes of that Man, who is not to be reclaimed from an Evil courſe, neither by the apprehenſion of danger, nor of diſgrace, and who can at once ſecurely neglect both his Safety and Reputation.

Hear how the Prophet repreſents the deplorable Caſe of ſuch Perſons, *Iſa.* 3. 9. *The ſhew of their countenance bears*

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Vol. 8. *bears witneſs againſt them*; in the *Hebrew* it is, *The hardneſs of their countenance doth teſtifie againſt them, and they declare their ſin, as Sodom, they hide it not. Wo unto their Souls, for they have rewarded evil to themſelves.* When Men are once arrived to that pitch of Impiety, as to harden their Foreheads againſt all ſenſe and ſhew of Shame, and ſo as to be able to ſet a good face upon the fouleſt Matter in the World; *wo unto them*, becauſe their Caſe ſeems then to be deſperate, and paſt all hopes of Recovery. For who can hope, that a Man will forſake his Sins, when he is not ſo much as aſhamed of them? But yet one would think, that thoſe that are not aſhamed of their Impiety, ſhould be aſhamed of their Impudence, and ſhould at leaſt bluſh at this, that they can do the vileſt and the moſt ſhameful things in the World without bluſhing.

To conclude this whole Diſcourſe, let the Conſideration of the evil and ſhamefulneſs of Sin have this double effect upon us, to make us heartily aſhamed of the paſt Errors and Miſcarriages

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riages of our Lives, and firmly resolved to do better for the future. Serm. 6.

I. To be heartily ashamed of the past Errors of our Lives. So often as we reflect upon the manifold and heinous Provocations of the Divine Majesty, which many of us have been guilty of in the long course of a wicked Life, together with the heavy Aggravations of our Sins, by all the circumstances that can render them abominable and shameful, not only in the Eye of God and Men, but of our own Consciences likewise; we have great reason to humble our selves before God, in a penitent acknowledgment of them, and every one of us to say with *Job*, *Behold I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth, I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes*; and with *Ezra*, *O my God! I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God; for our iniquities are increased over our heads, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens: And now, O my God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments*; and with holy *Daniel*, *We have sinned, and have committed*

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committed iniquity, and have done wickedly; O Lord! Righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of face. Thus we should reproach and upbraid our selves, in the Presence of that Holy God, whom we have so often and so higly offended, and against whom we have done as evil things as we could, and say with the prodigal Son in the Parable; *Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son.*

If we would thus take shame to our selves, and humble our selves before God, he would *be merciful to us miserable Sinners*; he would *take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously*; and so soon as ever he saw us coming towards him, would meet us with joy, and embrace us in the Arms of his Mercy. And then,

II. As we should be heartily ashamed of the past Errours and Miscarriages of our Lives, so we should firmly resolve, by God's Grace, to do better for the future; never to consent to Iniquity, or to do any thing which we are convinc'd is contrary to our Duty, and

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and which will be matter of Shame to us, when we come to look back upon it, and make our Blood to riſe in our Faces at the mention or intimation of it, which will make us to ſneak, and *hang down our heads*, when we are twitted and upbraided with it, and which, if it be not prevented by a timely Humiliation and Repentance, will fill us with Horror and Amazement, with Shame and Confuſion of Face, both at the Hour of Death, and in the Day of Judgment.

So that when we look into our Lives, and examine the Actions of them, when we conſider what we have done, and what our Doings have deſerved, we ſhould, in a due ſenſe of the great and manifold Miſcarriages of our Lives, and from a deep Sorrow and Shame and Deteſtation of our ſelves for them, I ſay, we ſhould, with that true Penitent deſcribed in *Job*, take Words to our ſelves, and ſay, *Surely it is meet to be ſaid unto God, I will not offend any more; That which I know not, teach thou me; and if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.* And thus I have done with the *ſecond* Inconvenience

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convenience of a sinful and vicious Course of Life, *viz.* that the reflection upon it afterwards causeth Shame; *What fruit had you then in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed?*

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SERMON VII.

The final Issue of Sin, an Argument for Repentance.

The Third Sermon on this Text.

ROM. VI. 21, 22.

What fruit had ye then in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become Servants to God, ye have your fruit unto Holiness, and the end Everlasting Life.

THESE words are a Comparison between an Holy and Virtuous and a Sinful and Vicious Course of Life, and set before us

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Vol. 8. the manifest Inconveniences of the one, and the manifold Advantages of the other. I have enter'd into a Discourse upon the *First* of these Heads, *viz.* The manifest Inconveniences of a sinful and vicious Course: And the Text mentions these *three.*

I. That it is Unprofitable.

II. That the reflection upon it afterwards is matter of Shame. These *Two* I have spoken largely to. I shall now proceed to the

III. And *last* Inconvenience, which the Text mentions, of a sinful and vicious Course of Life, *viz.* That the final Issue and Consequence of these things is very dismal and miserable; *The end of those things is Death.* No Fruit then when ye did these things; shame now that you come to reflect upon them; and Misery and Death at the last.

There are indeed almost innumerable Considerations and Arguments to discourage and deter men from sin; the Unreasonableness of it in it self; the Injustice

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Injuſtice and Diſloyalty, and Ingratitude of it in reſpect to God; the ill Example of it to others; the Cruelty of it to our ſelves; the Shame and Diſhonour that attends it; the Grief and Sorrow which it will coſt us, if ever we be brought to a due Senſe of it; the Trouble and Horror of a guilty Conſcience, that will perpetually haunt us; but above all the miſerable Event and ſad Iſſue of a wicked Courſe of Life continued in, and finally unrepented of. The Temptations to ſin may be alluring enough, and look upon us with a ſmiling Countenance, and the Commiſſion may afford us a ſhort and imperfect Pleaſure: but the Remembrance of it will certainly be bitter, and the End of it miſerable. Serm. 7.

And this Conſideration is of all others the moſt apt to work upon the generality of men, eſpecially upon the more obſtinate and obdurate ſort of ſinners, and thoſe whom no other Arguments will penetrate; that whatever the preſent Pleaſure and Advantage of ſin may be, it will be Bitterneſs and Miſery in the end.

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The two former Inconvenieces of a sinful Course, which I have lately discourfed of, *viz.* That sin is Unprofitabte, and that it is Shameful, are very considerable, and ought to be great Arguments against it to every sinner, and considerate Man: and yet how light are they, and but as the very small dust upon the balance, in comparison of that insupportable weight of Misery which will oppress the sinner at last! *Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of Man that doth evil.* This, this is the sting of all, that *the end of these things is death.*

It is very usual in Scripture to express the greatest Happiness, and the greatest Misery, by Life and Death; Life being the first and most desirable of all other Blessings, because it is the Foundation of them, and that which makes us capable of all the rest. Hence we find in Scripture, that all the Blessings of the Gospel are summ'd up in this one word, *John* 20. 31. *These things are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ,*

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Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have Life through his Name. 1 Joh. 4. 9. *In this was manifest the love of God towards us, because God sent his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him.* So that under this Term or Notion of Life, the Scripture is wont to express all Happiness to us, and more especially that Eternal Life which is the great Promise of the Gospel. And this is Life by way of Eminency; as if this frail and mortal and miserable Life, which we live here in this World, did not deserve that Name. Serm. 7.

And on the other Hand, all the Evils which are consequent upon sin, especially the dreadful and lasting Misery of another World, are called by the Name of Death, *The end of these things is Death.* So the Apostle, here in the Text, and 23. v. *The wages of sin is Death,* not only a Temporal Death, but such a Death as is opposed to Eternal Life; *The wages of sin is Death: but the gift of God is Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* So that *Death* here in the

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Vol. 8. Text is plainly intended to comprehend in it all those fearful and astonishing Miseries, wherewith the wrath of God will pursue and afflict sinners in another World.

But what and how great this Misery is, I am not able to declare to you; *it hath* no more *enter'd into the heart of man*, than those great and glorious things which *God hath laid up for them that love him*: and as I would fain hope, that none of us here shall ever have the sad experience of it; so none but those who have felt it, are able to give a tolerable description of the intolerableness of it.

But by what the Scripture hath said of it in general, and in such Metaphors as are most level to our present Capacity, it appears so full of Terror, that I am loth to attempt the Representation of it. There are so many other Arguments, that are more Humane and Natural, and more proper to work upon the Reason and Ingenuity of Men; as the great Love and Kindness of God to us; the grievous Sufferings of his Son for us; the Unreason-

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Unreaſonableneſs and Shamefulneſs of ſin; the preſent Benefit and Advantage, the Peace and Pleaſure of an Holy and Virtuous Life; and the mighty Rewards promiſed to it in another World, that one would think theſe ſhould be abundantly ſufficient to prevail with men to gain them to goodneſs, and that they need not be frighted into it, and to have the Law laid to them, as it was once given to the People of *Iſrael*, *in thunder and lightning, in blackneſs, in darkneſs and tempeſt*, ſo as to make them *exceedingly to fear and tremble.* And it ſeems a very hard Caſe, that when we have to deal with men, ſenſible enough of their Intereſt in other Caſes, and diligent enough to mind it, we cannot perſwade them to accept of Happineſs, without ſetting before them the Terrors of Eternal Darkneſs, and thoſe amazing and endleſs Miſeries, which will certainly be the Portion of thoſe who refuſe ſo great an Happineſs; this I ſay ſeems very hard, that men muſt be carried to the Gate of Hell, before they can be brought to ſet their faces towards Heaven, and Serm. 7.

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to think in good earnest of getting thither.

And yet it cannot be dissembled, that the Nature of men is so degenerate, as to stand in need of this Argument; and that men are so far engaged in an Evil Course, that they are not to be reclaimed from it by any other Consideration, but of the endless and unspeakable Misery of impenitent sinners in another World. And therefore God, knowing how necessary this is, doth frequently make use of it; and our Blessed Saviour, than whom none was ever more mild and gentle, doth often set this Consideration before men to take them off from sin, and to bring them to do better. And this St. *Paul* tells us, *Rom.* 1. 18. is one principal thing which renders the Gospel so powerful an Instrument for the reforming and saving of Mankind, because *therein the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.*

So that how harsh and unpleasant soever this Argument may be, the great stupidity and folly of some men,

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men, and their inveterate obſtinacy in an Evil Courſe makes it neceſſary for us to preſs it home, that thoſe who will not be moved, and made ſenſible of the danger and inconvenience of ſin by gentler Arguments, may be rous'd and awakened by the Terrors of Eternal Miſery. Serm. 7.

That the laſt Iſſue and Conſequence of a wicked Life will be very Miſerable, the general Apprehenſion of Mankind concerning the fate of bad men in another World, and the ſecret miſgivings of mens Conſciences, gives men too much ground to fear. Beſides that the Juſtice of Divine Providence, which is not many times in this World ſo clear and manifeſt, does ſeem to require that there ſhould be a time of Recompence, when the Virtue and Patience of good men ſhould be Rewarded, and the Inſolence and Obſtinacy of bad men ſhould be Puniſh'd. This cannot but appear very reaſonable to any Man, that conſiders the Nature of God, and is perſwaded that he governs the World, and hath given Laws to Mankind, by the obſervance whereof they may be

Happy,

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Vol. 8. Happy, and by the neglect and contempt whereof they must be Miserable.

But that there might remain no doubts upon the Minds of men, concerning these matters, God hath been pleas'd to reveal this from Heaven, by a Person sent by him on purpose to declare it to the World; and to the truth of these Doctrines concerning a future state and a day of Judgment, and Recompences, God hath given Testimony by unquestionable Miracles wrought for the Confirmation of them, and particularly by *the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead, whereby he hath given an assurance unto all men, that he is* the Person *ordained by God to Judge the World in righteousness, and to render to every Man according to his deeds; to them, who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal Life; but to them, who obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of Man that doth evil.*

So

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Serm. 7.

So that how quietly ſoever wicked Men may paſs through this World, or out of it, (which they ſeldom do) Miſery will certainly overtake their Sins at laſt; unſpeakable and intolerable Miſery, ariſing from the anguiſh of a guilty Conſcience; from a lively Apprehenſion of their ſad Loſs; and from a quick ſenſe of the ſharp Pain which they labour under; and all this aggravated and ſet off with the Conſideration of paſt Pleaſure, and the Deſpair of future Eaſe. Each of theſe is Miſery enough, and all of them together do conſtitute and make up that diſmal and forlorn State, which the Scripture calls Hell and Damnation.

I ſhall therefore briefly repreſent (for it is by no means deſirable to dwell long upon ſo melancholy and frightful an Argument,)

Firſt, The principal Ingredients which conſtitute this miſerable State. And,

Secondly, The Aggravations of it.

Firſt,

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First, The principal Ingredients which constitute this miserale State; and they are these *three* which I have mentioned.

I. The Anguish of a guilty Mind.

II. The lively Apprehensions of the invaluable Happiness which they have lost.

III. A quick Sense of the intolerable Pains which they lie under.

I. The Anguish of a guilty Conscience. And this is natural; for there is a Worm that abides in a guilty Conscience, and is continually gnawing it. This is that our Saviour calls *the Worm that dyes not.* And tho' God should inflict no positive Punishment upon Sinners, yet this is a Revenge which every Man's Mind would take upon him; for things are so order'd by God in the original Frame and Constitution of our Minds, that on the one hand Peace and Pleasure, Contentment and Satisfaction do naturally arise in our Minds from the Conscience

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science of Well-doing, and spring up in the Soul of every good Man: And on the other hand, no Man knowingly does an evil Action, but his guilty Conscience galls him for it, and the remembrance of it is full of Bitterness to him. Serm. 7.

And this the Sinner feels in this World; he disguiseth and dissembleth his Trouble as much as he can, and shifts off these uneasie Thoughts by all the Diversions he can devise, and by this means palliates his Disease, and renders his Condition in some sort tolerable unto himself: but when he is alone, or cast upon the Bed of Sickness, and his Thoughts are let loose upon him, and he hath nothing to give them a Diversion, how does his Guilt ferment and work! and the Feaver, which lurkt before, does now shew it self, and is ready to burn him up; so that nothing can appear more dismal and ghastly, than such a Man does to himself.

And much more, when Sinners come into the other World, and are entred into the Regions of Darkness, and

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Vol. 8. and the melancholy Shades, where Evil Spirits are continually wandring up and down; where they can meet with nothing either of Employment or Pleaſure, to give the leaſt Diverſion to their penſive Minds; where they ſhall find nothing to do, but to reflect upon, and bemoan themſelves; where all the wicked Actions that ever they committed ſhall come freſh into their Minds, and ſtare their Conſciences in the face. It is not to be imagined, what ſad Scenes will then be preſent to their Imaginations, and what ſharp Reflections their own guilty Minds will make upon them, and what Swarms of Furies will poſſeſs them.

So ſoon as ever they are entered upon that State, they will then find themſelves forſaken of all thoſe Comforts which they once placed ſo much Happineſs in; and they will have nothing to converſe with, but their own uneaſie ſelves, and thoſe that are as miſerable as themſelves, and therefore uncapable of adminiſtring any Comfort to one another. They will then have nothing to think on,

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on, but what will trouble them; and every new Thought will be a new increase of their Trouble. Their Guilt will make them restless, and the more restless they are, the more will their Minds be enraged; and there will be no end of their Vexation, because the Cause and Ground of it is perpetual. For there is no possible way to get rid of Guilt, but by Repentance; and there is no Encouragment, no Argument to Repentance, where there is no hope of Pardon. So that if God should hold his Hand, and leave Sinners to themselves, and to the Lashes of their own Conscience, a more severe and terrible Torment can hardly be imagin'd, than that which a guilty Mind would execute upon it self. Serm. 7.

II. Another Ingredient into the Miseries of Sinners in another World, is the lively Apprehension of the invaluable Happiness which they have lost by their own Obstinacy and foolish Choice. In the next World wicked Men shall be for ever separated from God, who is the Fountain of Happiness, and from all the Comforts of his Presence and Favour. This, our Saviour

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viour tells us, is the first part of that dreadful Sentence that shall be passed upon the wicked at the great Day; *Depart from me*; which Words, tho' they do not signifie any positive Infliction and Torment, yet they import the greatest Loss that can be imagined. And it is not so easie to determine which is the greatest of Evils, Loss or Pain. Indeed to a Creature that is only endowed with Sense, there can be no Misery but that of Pain and Suffering: but to those who have Reason and Understanding, and are capable of knowing the value of things, and of reflecting upon themselves in the want of them, the greatest loss may be as grievous and hard to be born, as the greatest pain.

'Tis true, that sinners are now so immerst in the gross and sensual delights of this World, that they have no apprehension of the Joys of Heaven, and the Pleasures of God's presence, and of the Happiness that is to be enjoyed in Communion with him, and therefore they are not now capable of estimating the greatness of this loss. But this insensibleness of wicked

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wicked men continues no longer than this present state, which affords them variety of Objects of Pleasure and of Business to divert them and entertain them: but when they come into the other World, they shall then have nothing else to think upon, but the sad Condition into which they have brought themselves, nothing to do but to pore and meditate upon their own Misfortune, when they shall lift up their Eyes, and with *the rich Man* in the Parable, in the midst of their *Torments*, look up to those who are *in Abraham's bosom*; and their Misery will be mightily increased by the Contemplation of that Happiness which others enjoy, and themselves have so foolishly forfeited and fallen short of; insomuch that it would be happy for them, if that God, from whose presence they are banisht, that Heaven from which they have excluded themselves, and that everlasting Glory, which they have despised and neglected, might be for ever hid from their Eyes, and never come into their Minds. Serm. 7.

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III. This is not all, but beſides the ſad Apprehenſion of their Loſs, they ſhall endure the ſharpeſt Pains. Theſe God hath threatned ſinners withal, and they are in Scripture repreſented to us, by the moſt grievous and intolerable Pains that in this World we are acquainted withal, as by the Pain of Burning. Hence the wicked are ſaid *to be caſt into the Lake, which burns with fire and brimſtone,* and *into the fire which is not quenched*; which whether it be literally to be underſtood or not, is certainly intended to ſignifie the moſt ſevere kind of Torment; but what that is, and in what manner it ſhall be inflicted, none know but they that feel it, and lie under it. The Scripture tells ſo much in general of it, as is enough to warn men to avoid it; that it is the effect of a mighty Diſpleaſure, and of Anger armed with Omnipotence, and conſequently muſt needs be very terrible, more dreadful than we can now conceive, and probably greater than can be deſcribed by any of thoſe Pains and Sufferings which now we are acquainted withal; for

who

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who knows the power of God's anger, and the utmost of what Almighty Justice can do to Sinners? Who can Comprehend the vast significancy of those Expressions, *Fear him, who after he hath killed, can destroy both body and soul in Hell?* and again, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God?* One would think this were Misery enough, and needed no farther Aggravation; and yet it hath *Two* terrible ones, from the Consideration of past Pleasures which Sinners have enjoyed in this World, and from an utter Despair of future Ease and Remedy. Serm. 7.

1. From the Consideration of the past Pleasures which Sinners have enjoy'd in this Life. This will make their Sufferings much more sharp and sensible; for as nothing commends Pleasure more, and gives Happiness a quicker taste and relish, than precedent Sufferings and Pain, there is not perhaps a greater Pleasure in the World, than the strange and sudden Ease which a Man finds after a sharp fit of the Stone or Cholick, or after a Man is taken off the

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Vol. 8. Rack, and Nature which was in an Agony before is all at once set at perfect Ease: So on the other Hand, nothing exasperates Suffering more, and sets a keener Edge upon Misery, than to step into Afflictions and Pain immediately out of a state of great Ease and Pleasure. This we find in the Parable was the great Aggravation of the rich Man's Torment, that he had first *received his good things*, and was afterwards *Tormented*. We may do well to consider this, that those Pleasures of Sin which have now so much of Temptation in them, will in the next World be one of the chief Aggravations of our Torment.

2. The greatest Aggravation of this Misery will be, that it is attended with the Despair of any future Ease; and when Misery and Despair meet together, they make a Man compleatly miserable. The duration of this Misery is expresst to us in Scripture, by such words as are us'd to signifie the longest and most interminable duration. *Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire.* Matt. 25. 41. *Where the worm dieth*

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dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. Mark. 9. 43. *and* 2 Thess. 1. 7. It is there said, that those *who know not God, and obey not the Gospel of his Son, shall be punisht with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.* And in *Rev.* 20. 10. That *the wicked shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.* And what can be imagined beyond this? This is the perfection of Misery, to lie under the greatest Torment, and yet be in despair of ever finding the least Ease. Serm. 7.

And thus I have done with the *First* thing I propounded to speak to from this Text, *viz.* The manifest Inconveniences of a sinful and vicious Course of Life; that it brings no present Benefit or Advantage to us; that the reflection upon it causeth Shame; and that it is fearful and miserable in the last Issue and Consequence of it. *What fruit had you,* &c.

I should now have proceeded to the *Second* Part of the Text, which represents to us the manifold Advantages of an Holy and Virtuous Course

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Vol. 8. of Life; 22. v. *But now being made free from ſin, and become the ſervants of righteouſneſs, ye have your fruit unto holineſs*, there's the preſent Advantage of it; *and the end everlaſting life*, there's the future Reward of it. But this is a large Argument, which will require a Diſcourſe by it ſelf, and therefore I ſhall not now enter upon it; but ſhall only make ſome reflections upon what hath been ſaid, concerning the miſerable Iſſue and Conſequence of a wicked Life impenitently perſiſted in.

And ſurely, if we firmly believe and ſeriouſly conſider theſe things, we have no reaſon to be fond of any Vice; we can take no great Comfort or Contentment in a ſinful Courſe. If we could for the ſeeming Advantage and ſhort Pleaſure of ſome ſins, diſpenſe with the Temporal Miſchiefs and Inconveniences of them, which yet I cannot ſee how any Prudent and Conſiderate Man could do; if we could conquer Shame, and bear the Infamy and Reproach which attends moſt ſins, and could digeſt the upbraidings of our own Conſciences,

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so often as we call them to remembrance, and reflect seriously upon them; tho' for the gratifying an importunate Inclination, and an impetuous Appetite, all the Inconveniences of them might be born withal; yet methinks the very thought of the End and Issue of a wicked Life, that *the end of these things is Death*, that *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish*, far greater than we can now describe or imagine, *shall be to every soul of Man that doth evil*, should over-rule us. Tho' the violence of an irregular lust and desire are able to bear down all other Arguments, yet methinks the Eternal Interest of our precious and immortal Souls should still lie near our Hearts, and affect us very sensibly. Methinks the Consideration of another World, and of all Eternity, and of that dismal fate which attends Impenitent Sinners after this Life, and the dreadful hazard of being miserable for ever, should be more than enough to dishearten any Man from a wicked life, and to bring him to a better Mind and Course. Serm. 7.

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And if the plain Repreſentations of theſe things do not prevail with men to this purpoſe, it is a ſign that either they do not believe theſe things, or elſe that they do not conſider them, one of theſe two muſt be the reaſon why any Man, notwithſtanding theſe terrible threatnings of God's Word, does venture to continue in an Evil Courſe.

'Tis vehemently to be ſuſpected, that men do not really believe theſe things, that they are not fully perſwaded that there is another ſtate after this Life, in which the righteous God *will render to every Man according to his deeds*; and therefore ſo much Wickedneſs as we ſee in the lives of men, ſo much Infidelity may reaſonably be ſuſpected to lie lurking in their Hearts. They may indeed ſeemingly profeſs to believe theſe things; but he that would know what a Man inwardly and firmly believes, ſhould attend rather to his Actions, than to his Verbal Profeſſions: For if any Man lives ſo, as no Man that believes the Principles of the Chriſtian Religion

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Religion in reaſon can live, there is too much reaſon to queſtion whether that Man doth believe his Religion; he may ſay he does, but there is a far greater Evidence in the Caſe than Words; the Actions of the Man are by far the moſt credible Declarations of the inward Senſe and Perſwaſion of his Mind. Serm. 7.

Did men firmly and heartily believe that there is a God that governs the World, and regards the Actions of men, and that *he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the World in righteouſneſs*, and that all Mankind ſhall appear before him in that day, and every Action that they have done in their whole lives ſhall be brought upon the Stage, and paſs a ſtrict Examination and Cenſure, and that thoſe who have made Conſcience of their Duty to God and men, and have *lived ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent World*, ſhall be unſpeakably and eternally Happy in the next; but thoſe who have lived lewd, and licentious lives, and perſiſted in an Impenitent Courſe, ſhall be extreamly

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ly and everlastingly miserable, without Pity, and without Comfort, and without Remedy, and without Hope of ever being otherwise; I say, if men were fully and firmly perswaded of these things, it is not Credible, it is hardly Possible that they should live such Prophane and Impious, such Careless and Dissolute Lives, as we daily see a great part of Mankind do.

That Man that can be aw'd from his Duty, or tempted to Sin by any of the Pleasures or Terrors of this World, that for the present enjoyment of his Lusts can be contented to venture his Soul, what greater Evidence than this can there be, that this Man does not believe the threatnings of the Gospel, and how *fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God.* That Man that can be willing to undergo an hard Service for several years, that he may be in a way to get an Estate, and be rich in this World; and yet will not be perswaded to restrain himself of his Liberty, or to deny his Pleasure, or to check his Appetite

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or Luſt, for the greateſt Reward that God can promiſe, or the ſevereſt Puniſhment that he can threaten; can any Man reaſonably think, that this Man is perſwaded of any ſuch Happineſs or Miſery after this Life, as is plainly revealed in the Goſpel, that *verily there is a reward for the righteous, and verily there is a God that judgeth the Earth?* For what can he that believes not one ſyllable of the Bible, do worſe than this comes to? Serm. 7.

A ſtrong and vigorous Faith, even in Temporal Caſes, is a powerful Principle of Action, eſpecially if it be back'd and enforc'd with Arguments of fear. He that believes the reality of a thing, and that it is good for him, and that it may be attained, and that if he do attain it, it will make him very happy, and that without it he ſhall be extreamly miſerable; ſuch a Belief and Perſwaſion will put a Man upon difficult things, and make him to put forth a vigorous endeavour, and to uſe a mighty induſtry for the obtaining of that, concerning which he is thus perſwaded.

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Vol. 8. And the Faith of the Gospel ought to be so much the more powerful, by how much the Objects of hope and fear, which it presents to us, are greater and more considerable. Did men fully believe the Happiness of Heaven, and the Torments of Hell, and were they as verily perswaded of the truth of them, as if they were before their Eyes, how insignificant would all the Terrors and Temptations of Sense be to draw them into Sin, and seduce them from their Duty.

But altho' it seems very strange, and almost incredible, that men should believe these things, and yet live wicked and impious lives; yet because I have no Mind, and God knows there's no need to increase the number of Infidels in this Age, I shall chuse rather to impute a great deal of the wickedness that is in the World, to the Inconsiderateness of men, than to their Unbelief. I will grant that they do in some sort believe these things, or at least that they do not disbelieve them; and then the great cause of mens ruin must be, that they do

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do not attend to the Conſequence of this Belief, and how men ought to live that are thus perſwaded. Men ſtifle their Reaſon, and ſuffer themſelves to be hurried away by Senſe, into the embraces of ſenſual Objects and things preſent, but do not conſider what the end of theſe things will be, and what is like to become of them hereafter; for it is not to be imagined, but that that Man who ſhall calmly conſider with himſelf what Sin is, the ſhortneſs of its Pleaſure, and the Eternity of its Puniſhment, ſhould ſeriouſly reſolve upon a better Courſe of life. Serm. 7.

And why do we not Conſider theſe things, which are of ſo infinite Concernment to us? What have we our Reaſon for, but to reflect upon our ſelves, and to mind what we do, and wiſely to compare things together, and upon the whole matter to judge what makes moſt for our true and laſting Intereſt? to Conſider our whole ſelves, our Souls as well as our Bodies; and our whole duration not only in this World, but in the other, not only with regard to Time, but to Eternity? to look before us to the laſt Iſſue

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Vol. 8. Issue and Event of our Actions, and to the farthest Consequence of them, and to reckon upon what will be hereafter, as well as what is present; and if we suspect or hope or fear, especially if we have good reason to believe a future state after Death, in which we shall be happy or miserable to all Eternity, according as we manage and behave our selves in this World, to resolve to make it our greatest Design and Concernment while we are in this World, so to live and demean our selves, that we may be of the number of those that shall be accounted worthy to escape that Misery, and to obtain that happiness, which will last and continue for ever.

And if men would but apply their Minds seriously to the Consideration of these things, they could not act so imprudently as they do, they would not live so by chance and without design, taking the Pleasure that comes next, and avoiding the present Evils which press upon them, without any regard to those that are future, and at a distance, tho' they be infinitely greater and more considerable: If men could have the Patience to debate and argue

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argue these matters with themselves, they could not live so preposterously as they do, preferring their Bodies before their Souls, and the World before God, and the things which are Temporal before the things that are Eternal. Serm. 7.

Did men verily and in good earnest believe but half of that to be true, which hath now been declared to you, concerning the miserable state of impenitent Sinners in another World, (and I am very sure, that the one half of that which is true concerning that state hath not been told you) I say did we in any measure believe what hath been so imperfectly represented, *What manner of persons should we all be, in all holy conversation and godliness, waiting for, and hastening unto* (that is making haste to make the best preparation we could for) *the coming of the day of God!*

I will conclude all with our Saviour's Exhortation to his Disciples, and to all others; *Watch ye therefore and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things, and to stand before the Son of Man: To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end.* Amen.

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SERMON VIII.

The preſent and future Advantage of an Holy and Virtuous Life.

The Fourth Sermon on this Text.

ROM. VI. 21, 22.

What fruit had ye then in thoſe things, whereof ye are now aſhamed? For the end of thoſe things is death. But now being made free from ſin, and become Servants to God, ye have your fruit unto Holineſs, and the end Everlaſting Life.

I Have ſeveral times told you, that the Apoſtle in theſe words makes a Compariſon between an Holy and Virtuous, and a Sinful and Vicious

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Course of Life, and sets before us the manifest Inconveniences of the one, and the manifold Advantages of the other.

I have finish'd my Discourse upon the *First* Part of the Comparison; the manifest Inconveniences of a sinful and vicious Course. I proceed now to the other Part of the Comparison, which was the

Second Thing I propounded to speak to from these words, *viz.* the manifold Benefits and Advantages of an Holy and Virtuous Course; and that upon these *Two* accounts.

First, Of the present Benefit and Advantage of it, which the Apostle here calls *Fruit*, *Ye have your fruit unto holiness.*

Secondly, In respect of the future reward of it, *and the end everlasting life.* So that here is a considerable Earnest in hand, besides a mighty Recompence afterwards, infinitely beyond the proportion of our best Actions and Services, both in regard of the greatness

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greatneſs and duration of it, *everlaſting life*; that is, for a few tranſient acts of Obedience, a perfect and immutable and endleſs ſtate of Happineſs. And theſe *Two* the Apoſtle mentions in Oppoſition to the Inconveniences and Evil Conſequences of a wicked and vicious Courſe; *What fruit had you then in thoſe things*, &c. Serm. 8.

But before I come to ſpeak to theſe *Two* particulars, I ſhall take notice of the deſcription which the Apoſtle here makes, of the change from a ſtate of Sin and Vice to a ſtate of Holineſs and Virtue. *But now being made free from ſin, and become the ſervants of God*; intimating that the ſtate of ſin is a ſtate of Servitude and Slavery, from which Repentance and the change which is thereby made does ſet us free; *but now being made free from ſin.* And ſo our Saviour tells us, that *whoſoever committeth ſin is the Servant of ſin*; and this is the vileſt and hardeſt Slavery in the World, becauſe it is the Servitude of the Soul, the beſt and nobleſt part of our ſelves; 'tis the ſubjection of our Reaſon, which ought to

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rule and bear Sway over the inferior Faculties, to our ſenſual Appetites and brutiſh Paſſions, which is as uncomely a ſight, as *to ſee Beggars ride on Horſe back, and Princes walk on foot*; and as Inferiour Perſons, when they are advanced to Power, are ſtrangely Inſolent and Tyrannical towards thoſe that are ſubject to them; ſo the Luſts and Paſſions of men, when they once get the Command of them, are the moſt domineering Tyrants in the World, and there is no ſuch Slave as a Man that is ſubject to his Appetite and Luſt, that is under the Power of irregular Paſſions and vicious Inclinations, which tranſport and hurry him to the vileſt and moſt unreaſonable things. For a wicked Man is a Slave to as many Maſters as he hath Paſſions and Vices; and they are very imperious and exacting, and the more he yields to them, the more they grow upon him, and exerciſe the greater Tyranny over him; and being ſubject to ſo many Maſters, the poor Slave is continually divided and diſtracted between their contrary Commands and Impoſitions; one Paſſion hurries him one

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one way, and another as violently drives him another; one Luſt commands him upon ſuch a Service, and another it may be at the ſame time calls him to another Work. His Pride and Ambition bids him ſpend and lay it out, whilſt his Covetouſneſs holds his Hand faſt cloſed; ſo that he knows not many times how to diſpoſe of himſelf or what to do; he muſt diſpleaſe ſome of his Maſters, and what Inclination ſoever he contradicts, he certainly diſpleaſeth himſelf. Serm. 8.

And that which aggravates the Miſery of his Condition is, that he voluntarily ſubmits to this Servitude. In other Caſes men are made Slaves againſt their wills, and are brought under the Force and Power of others, whom they are not able to reſiſt: but the ſinner chuſeth this Servitude, and willingly puts his neck under this yoke. There are few men in the World ſo ſick of their Liberty, and ſo weary of their own Happineſs, as to chuſe this Condition: but the Sinner ſells himſelf, and voluntarily parts with that Liberty, which he

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Vol. 8. might keep, and which none could take from him.

And which makes this Condition yet more intolerable, he makes himself a Slave to his own Servants, to those who are born to be subject to him, to his own Appetites and Passions; and this certainly is the worst kind of Slavery, so much worse than that of Mines and Gallies, as the Soul is more Noble and Excellent than the Body.

Men are not usually so sensible of the Misery of this kind of Servitude, because they are govern'd by Sense more than Reason: But according to a true Judgment and Estimation of things, a Vicious Course Life is the saddest Slavery of all others. And therefore the Gospel represents it as a design every way worthy of the Son of God, to come down from Heaven, and to debase himself so far, as to assume our Nature, and to submit to the Death of the Cross, on purpose to rescue us from this Slavery, and to assert us into *the liberty of the Sons of God.* And this is the great design of the Doctrine of

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of the Gospel, to free men from the Bondage of their Lusts, and to bring them to the Service of God, *whose service is perfect freedom.* And therefore our Saviour tells us, *John* 8. 31, 32. That *if we continue in his word*, i. e. if we obey his Doctrine, and frame our lives according to it, it will make us free; *Ye shall know* (says he) *the truth, and the truth shall make you free.* And if we observe it, the Scripture delights very much to set forth to us the Benefits and Advantages of the Christian Religion by the Metaphor of Liberty, and Redemption from Captivity and Slavery. Hence our Saviour is so often call'd *the Redeemer*, and *Deliverer*, and is said to have *obtained eternal Redemption for us.* And the publishing of the Gospel is compared to the Proclaming of the year of *Jubile* among the *Jews*, when all Persons that would were set at Liberty. *Isa.* 61. 1, 2. *The spirit of the Lord is upon me*, saith the Prophet, speaking in the Person of the Messiah, *because he hath anointed me to Proclaim liberty to the Captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year* Serm. 8.

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of the Lord. And it is probable that upon this account likewise the Christian Doctrine or Law is by St. *James* call'd *the Royal law of liberty.*

This is the great design of Christianity, to set men free from the Slavery of their Lusts, and to this end the Apostle tells us, *Tit.* 2. 13. that *Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*; and herein the great Mercy and Compassion of God towards Mankind appeared, in that he sent his Son to rescue us from that Servitude, which we had so long groaned under, *that being made free from sin, we might become the servants of God,* and *the servants of righteousness.*

And this he hath done not only by the price of his Blood, but by the Power and Purity of his Doctrine, and the Holy Example of his Life, and by all those Considerations which represent to us the Misery of our sinful state, and the infinite danger of continuing in it: and on the other Hand, by setting before us the Advantages

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vantages of a Religious and Holy Life, and what a bleſſed change we make, when we quit the Service of Sin, and become the Servants of God. It will not only be a mighty preſent Benefit to us; but will make us happy to all Eternity; and theſe are the *Two* Conſiderations which at firſt I propounded to ſpeak to at this time. Serm. 8.

Firſt, The preſent Benefit of an Holy and Virtuous Life, which the Apoſtle here calls *Fruit*; *But now being made free from ſin, and become the ſervants of God, ye have your fruit unto holineſs.*

Secondly, The future Reward and Recompence of it; *and the end everlaſting life.*

Firſt, Let us conſider the preſent Benefit and Advantage of an Holy and Virtuous Life, which the Apoſtle here calls *Fruit*. If all things be truly conſider'd, there is no Advantage comes to any Man by a wicked and vicious Courſe of Life. A wicked Life is no preſent Advantage; the reflection upon it afterwards is ſhame-

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shameful and troublesom; and the end of it miserable. But on the contrary, the Advantages of an holy and good life are many and great even in this World, and upon temporal accounts, abstracting from the Consideration of a future Reward in the World to come.

I shall instance in *Five* or *Six* eminent Advantages, which it usually brings to men in this World.

I. It brings great Peace and Contentment of Mind.

II. It is a very fit and proper Means to promote our outward temporal Interest.

III. It tends to the lengthning our days, and hath frequently the Blessing of long Life attending upon it.

IV. It gives a Man great Peace and Comfort when he comes to die.

V. After Death it transmits a good Name and Reputation to Posterity.

VI. It

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VI. It derives a Bleſſing upon our Poſterity after us. And theſe are certainly the greateſt Bleſſings that a wiſe Man can aim at, and deſign to himſelf in this World. Every one of theſe taken ſeverally is very conſiderable; but all of them together compleat a Man's temporal Felicity, and raiſe it to as high a pitch as is to be expected in this World.

I. A Religious and Virtuous courſe of Life is the beſt way to Peace and Contentment of Mind, and does commonly bring it. And to a wiſe Man, that knows how to value the eaſe and ſatisfaction of his own Mind, there cannot be a greater temptation to Religion and Virtue, than to conſider that it is the beſt and only way to give reſt to his Mind. And this is preſent *Fruit* and ready Payment; becauſe it immediately follows, or rather accompanies the diſcharge of our Duty. *The fruit of righteouſneſs is peace*, ſaith the Prophet; and the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* ſpeaks of *the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs*, meaning that inward Peace which

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Vol. 8. which a Righteous Man hath in his own Mind.

A Man needs not to take pains, or to use many Arguments, to satisfie and content his own Mind, after he hath done a good Action, and to convince himself, that he hath no cause to be troubled for it; for Peace and Pleasure do naturally spring from it: Nay, not only so, but there is an unexpressible kind of pleasure and delight, that flows from the testimony of a good Conscience. Let but a Man take care to satisfie himself in the doing of his Duty, and whatever troubles and storms may be raised from without, all will be clear and calm within: For nothing but guilt can trouble a Man's Mind, and fright his Conscience, and make him uneasie to himself; *that* indeed will wound his Spirit, and sting his very Soul, and make him full of fearful and tormenting thoughts. This *Cain* found after he had committed that crying sin of Murdering his Brother. *Gen.* 4. 6. *The Lord said unto* Cain, *why art thou wrath? and why is thy Countenance fall'n?* His guilt made him full of wrath, and discontent fill'd his

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his Mind with vexation, and his Countenance with ſhame and confuſion. When a Man's conſcience is awakened to a ſenſe of his guilt, it is angry and froward, and harder to be ſtill'd than a peeviſh Child: But the practice of Holineſs and Virtue does produce juſt the contrary effects; it fills a Man's Mind with Pleaſure, and makes his Countenance chearful. Serm. 8.

And this certainly, if it be well conſider'd, is no ſmall and contemptible advantage. The peace and tranquillity of our Minds is the great thing, which all the Philoſophy and Wiſdom of the World, did always deſign to bring men to, as the very utmoſt happineſs that a Wiſe Man is capable of in this Life; and 'tis that which no conſiderate Man would part with, for all that this World can give him. The greateſt fortune in this World ought to be no temptation to any Man in his Wits, to ſubmit to perpetual Sickneſs and Pain for the gaining of it; and yet there is no diſeaſe in the World, that for the ſharpneſs of it is comparable to the ſting of a guilty Mind, and no pleaſure equal to that of Innocence and

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Vol. 8. and a good Conscience. And this naturally springs up in the Mind of a good Man, where it is not hindred either by a melancholy temper, or by false Principles in Religion, which fill a Man with groundless fears and jealousies of the love and favour of God towards him; and excepting these two cases, this is the ordinary fruit of an holy and good course, which is not interrupted by frequent falling into sin, and great omissions and violations of our duty: For in this case the interruptions of our Peace and Comfort will naturally be answerable to the inequality of our Obedience.

II. Besides the present and inestimable Fruit of Holiness, the quiet and satisfaction of our own Minds, it is likewise a proper means to promote our Interest and Happiness in this World. For as every Vice is naturally attended with some Temporal Inconvenience of Pain or Loss; so there is no Grace or Virtue, but does apparently conduce to a Man's temporal Felicity. There are some Virtues which tend to the health of his Body, and the prolonging of his Life, as Tempe-

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Temperance and Chaſtity; others tend to Riches and Plenty, as Diligence and Induſtry in our callings; others to the ſecure and peaceable Enjoyment of what we have, as Truth and Fidelity, Juſtice and Honeſty in all our dealings and intercourſe with men. There are other Virtues that are apt to oblige Mankind to us, and to gain their Friendſhip and good Will, their Aid and Aſſiſtance, as Kindneſs, and Meekneſs, and Charity, and a generous Diſpoſition to do good to all, as far as we have Power and Oportunity. In a word, there is no real Intereſt of this World, but may ordinarily be as effectually promoted and purſued to as great Advantage, by a Man that Exerciſes himſelf in the Practice of all Virtue and Goodneſs, and uſually to far greater Advantage, than by one that is Intemperate and Debauch'd, Deceitful and Diſhoneſt, apt to diſoblige and provoke, ſour and ill-natur'd to all Mankind: For there is none of theſe Vices, but is to a Man's real hinderance and diſadvantage, in regard of one kind of Happineſs or another, which men aim at

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and

and propoſe to themſelves in this World.

III. A Religious and Virtuous Courſe of Life doth naturally tend to the prolonging of our days, and hath very frequently the Bleſſing of Health and long Life attending upon it. The Practice of a great many Virtues is a great Preſervative of Life and Health, as the due government of our Appetites and Paſſions, by Temperance and Chaſtity and Meekneſs, which prevent the chief Cauſes from within of Bodily Diſeaſes and Diſtempers; the due government of our Tongues and Converſation in reſpect of others, by Juſtice and Kindneſs, and abſtaining from Wrath and Provocation, which are a great ſecurity againſt the dangers of outward Violence, according to that of St. *Peter.* 1 *Epiſt.* 3. 10. *He that will love life and ſee good days, let him refrain his Tongue from evil, and his Lips that they ſpeak no guile, let him eſchew evil, and do good, let him ſeek peace and enſue it.*

And beſide the natural tendency of things, there is a ſpecial Bleſſing of God,

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God, which attends good men, and makes *their days long in the land which the Lord their God hath given them.* Serm. 8.

IV. There is nothing gives a Man so much Comfort when he comes to die, as the reflection upon an holy and good Life; and then surely above all other times Comfort is most valuable, because our frail and infirm Nature doth then stand most in need of it. Then usually mens Hearts are faint and their Spirits low, and every thing is apt to deject and trouble them; so that we had need to provide our selves of some excellent Cordial against that time; and there is no Comfort like to that of a clear Conscience, and of an innocent and useful Life. This will revive and raise a Man's Spirits under all the Infirmities of his Body, because it gives a Man good hopes concerning his Eternal State, and the hopes of that are apt to fill a Man with *Joy unspeakable and full of glory.*

The difference between good and bad Men is never so remarkable in

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Vol. 8. this World, as when they are upon their Death-Bed. This the Scripture observes to us, *Psal.* 37. 37. *Mark the perfect Man, and behold the upright, for the end of that Man is peace.*

With what Triumph and Exultation doth the Blessed Apostle St. *Paul*, upon the review of his Life, discourse concerning his Death and Dissolution? 2 *Tim.* 4. 6, 7, 8. *I am now ready*, says he, *to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand: I have fought a good fight, I have finish'd my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will give me at that day.* What would not any of us do to be thus affected when we come to leave the World, and to be able to bear the thoughts of Death and Eternity with so quiet and well satisfi'd a Mind! why, let us but endeavour to live Holy lives, and to be useful and serviceable to God in our Generation, as this holy Apostle was, and we shall have the same ground of Joy and Triumph which he had. For this is the proper and genuine effect of Virtue and

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and Goodneſs; *The work of righteouſneſs is peace, and the effect of righteouſneſs quietneſs and aſſurance for ever.* All the good Actions that we do in this Life are ſo many ſeeds of Comfort ſown in our own Conſciences, which will ſpring up one time or other, but eſpecially in the approaches of Death, when we come to take a ſerious review of our lives; for then mens Conſciences uſe to deal plainly and impartially with them, and to tell them the truth, and if at that time more eſpecially *our hearts condemn us not, then may we have comfort and confidence towards God.* Serm. 8.

V. An Holy and Virtuous Life doth tranſmit a good Name and Reputation to Poſterity. And this *Solomon* hath determined to be a much greater Happineſs, than for a Man to leave a great Eſtate behind him: *A good name* ſays he, *is rather to be choſen than great riches.* Pious and Virtuous men do commonly gain to themſelves a good Eſteem and Reputation in this World, while they are in it; but the Virtues of good men are not always ſo bright and ſhining, as to meet with that

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respect and acknowledgment which is due to them in this World. Many times they are much clouded by the Infirmities and Passions which attend them, and are shadowed by some affected singularities and morosities, which those which have liv'd more retir'd from the World are more liable to. Besides that the Envy of others, who are not so good as they, lies heavy upon them, and does depress them. For bad men are very apt to misinterpret the best Actions of the good, and put false colours upon them, and when they have nothing else to object against them, to charge them with Hypocrisie and Insincerity; an Objection as hard to be answer'd, as it is to be made good, unless we could see into the Hearts of men.

But when good men are dead and gone, and the bright and shining Example of their Virtues is at a convenient distance, and does not gall and upbraid others, then Envy ceaseth, and every Man is then content to give a good Man his due Praise, and his Friends and Posterity may then

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then quietly enjoy the Comfort of his Reputation, which is some sort of Blessing to him that is gone. This difference *Solomon* observes to us between good and bad men; *The memory of the just is blessed*, or *well spoken of: but the name of the wicked shall rot.* Serm. 8.

VI. And *lastly*, Religion and Virtue do derive a Blessing upon our Posterity after us. *Oh, that there were such an heart in them*, saith *Moses* concerning the People of *Israel*, *that they would fear me, and keep all my Commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their Children for ever!* And to this purpose there are many Promises in Scripture of God's *Blessing the Posterity of the righteous*, and his *shewing mercies to thousands of the Children of them that love him, and keep his Commandments.*

And this a great motive to Obedience, and toucheth upon that Natural Affection which men bear to their Children; so that if we have any Regard to them, or Concernment for their Happiness, we ought to be

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Vol. 8. very careful of our Duty, and afraid to offend God; because according as we demean our selves towards him, we entail a lasting Blessing or a great Curse upon our Children; by so many and and so strong bonds hath God tyed our Duty upon us, that if we either desire our own Happiness, or the Happiness of those that are dearest to us, and part of our selves, we must *fear God and keep his Commandments.*

And thus I have briefly represented to you, some of the chief Benefits and Advantages which an Holy and Virtuous life does commonly bring to men in this World, which is the *first* Encouragement mention'd in the Text; *ye have your fruit unto holiness.*

Before I proceed to the *Second*, I shall only just take notice, by way of Application, of what hath been said on this Argument.

1. That it is a great Encouragement to well-doing, to consider that ordinarily Piety and Goodness are no hindrance to a Man's temporal Felicity, but very frequently great promoters

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ters of it; so that excepting only the case of Persecution for Religion, I think I may safely challenge any Man, to shew me how the Practice of any Part or Duty of Religion, how the exercise of any Grace or Virtue is to the prejudice of a Man's temporal Interest, or does debar him of any true Pleasure, or hinder him of any real Advantage, which a prudent and considerate Man would think fit to chuse. And as for Persecution and Sufferings for Religion, God can Reward us for them, if he please, in this World, and we have all the assurance that we can desire, that he will do it abundantly in the next. Serm. 8.

2. The hope of long life, and especially of a quiet and comfortable death, should be a great encouragement to an Holy and Virtuous Life. He that lives well, takes the best course to live long, and lays in for an happy old Age, free from the Diseases and Infirmities which are naturally procur'd by a vicious Youth, and likewise free from the guilt and galling Remembrance of a wicked Life. And there is no condition, which we can fall into in this

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World, that does ſo clearly diſcover the difference between a good and bad Man, as a Death-bed: For then the good Man begins moſt ſenſibly to enjoy the comforts of Well-doing, and the Sinner to taſte the bitter fruits of Sin. What a wide difference is then to be ſeen, between the hopes and fears of theſe two ſorts of perſons! And ſurely next to the actual poſſeſſion of Bleſſedneſs, the good hopes and comfortable proſpect of it, are the greateſt Happineſs; and next to the actual ſenſe of Pain, the fear of Suffering is the greateſt Torment.

Tho' there were nothing beyond this life to be expected, yet if men were ſure to be poſſeſs'd with theſe delightful or troubleſome Paſſions when they come to dye, no Man that wiſely conſiders things would, for all the Pleaſures of ſin, forfeit the Comfort of a Righteous Soul, leaving this World full of the hope of Immortality; and endure the vexation and anguiſh of a guilty Conſcience, and that infinite terror and amazement which ſo frequently poſſeſſeth the Soul of a dying Sinner.

3. If

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3. If there be any ſpark of a generous mind in us, it ſhould animate us to do well, that we may be well ſpoken of when we are gone off the Stage, and may tranſmit a grateful Memory of our lives to thoſe that ſhall be after us. I proceed now to the

Second Thing I propoſed, as the great Advantage indeed, *Viz.* The glorious Reward of a Holy and Virtuous Life in another World, which is here called *everlaſting Life*; *And the end everlaſting Life*; by which the Apoſtle intends to expreſs to us, both the Happineſs of our future State, and the Way and Means whereby we are prepared and made meet to be made partakers of it; and that is by the conſtant and ſincere Endeavours of an holy and good Life. For 'tis they only that *have their fruit unto holineſs*, whoſe *end* ſhall be *everlaſting Life*. I ſhall ſpeak briefly to theſe *two*, and ſo conclude my diſcourſe upon this Text.

I. The Happineſs of our future ſtate, which is here expreſt by the name of *everlaſting Life*; in very few words, but ſuch

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Vol. 8. ſuch as are of wonderful weight and ſignificancy: For they import the Excellency of this ſtate, and the Eternity of it. And who is ſufficient to ſpeak to either of theſe Arguments? Both of them are too big to enter now into the heart of Man, too vaſt and boundleſs to be comprehended by humane underſtanding, and too unweildy to be manag'd by the Tongue of Men and Angels, anſwerably to the unſpeakable greatneſs and glory of them. And if I were able to declare them unto you, as they deſerv'd, you would not be able to hear me. And therefore I ſhall chuſe to ſay but little upon an Argument, of which I can never ſay enough, and ſhall very briefly conſider thoſe *two* things which are comprehended in that ſhort deſcription, which the Text gives us of our future Happineſs, by the name of *everlaſting Life*, *viz.* The Excellency of this ſtate, and the Eternity of it.

1. The Excellency of it, which is here repreſented to us under the notion of *Life*, the moſt deſirable of all other things, becauſe it is the Foundation of all other Enjoyments whatſoever. Barely to be in being, and to be ſenſible that

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that we are ſo, is but a dry Notion of Life. The true Notion of Life is to be well and to be happy, *vivere eſt benè valere.* They who are in the moſt miſerable condition that can be imagin'd, are in being, and ſenſible alſo that they are miſerable. But this kind of Life is ſo far from coming under the true Notion of Life, that the Scripture calls it *the ſecond death. Revel.* 21. 8. it is there ſaid, that *The wicked ſhall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimſtone, which is the ſecond death.* And, *Chap.* 20. ver. 6. *Bleſſed and holy is he, that hath part in the firſt Reſurrection, on ſuch the ſecond death ſhall have no power.* So that a ſtate of meer miſery and torment is not Life but Death; nay, the Scripture will not allow the Life of a wicked Man in this World to be true Life, but ſpeaks of him as dead. *Epheſ.* 2. 1. ſpeaking of the ſinners among the Gentiles, *You*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *hath he quickned, who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins.* And which is more yet, the Scripture calls a Life of ſinful Pleaſures (which men eſteem the only Happineſs of this world) the Scripture, I ſay, calls this a Death, 1 *Tim.* 5. 6. *She that liveth in pleaſures, is dead whilſt* Serm. 8.

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she liveth. A lewd and unprofitable Life, which serves to no good end and purpose, is a Death rather than a Life. Nay, that decaying and dying Life which we now live in this World, and which is allayed by the mixture of so many infirmities and pains, of so much trouble and sorrow, I say, that even this sort of Life, for all that we are so fondly in love with it, does hardly deserve the name of Life. But the Life of the world to come, of which we now speak, this is Life indeed; to do those things which we were made for, to serve the true Ends of our Being, and to enjoy the Comfort and Reward of so doing, this is the true notion of Life; and whatever is less than this, is Death, or a degree of it, and approach towards it. And therefore very well may Heaven and Happiness be describ'd by the notion of Life, because *truly to live* and *to be happy* are words that signifie the same thing.

But what kind of Life this is, I can no more describe to you in the particularities of it, than *Columbus* could have described the particular Manners and Customs of the People of *America*, before he or any other person in these parts

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parts of the World, had ſeen it or been there. But this I can ſay of it in general, and that from the infallible teſtimony of the great Creator and glorious Inhabitants of that bleſſed place, that it is a ſtate of pure Pleaſure and unmingled Joys, of Pleaſures more manly, more ſpiritual, and more refined, than any of the Delights of ſenſe, conſiſting in the enlargement of our Minds and Knowledge to a greater degree, and in the perfect exerciſe of Love and Friendſhip, in the Converſation of the beſt and wiſeſt Company, free from ſelf-intereſt, and all thoſe unſociable paſſions of Envy, and Jealouſie, of Malice and Ill-will, which ſpoil the Comfort of all Converſation in this World, and, in a word, free from all other Paſſion or Deſign, but an ardent and almoſt equal deſire to contribute all, that by all means poſſible they can, to the mutual Happineſs of one another: For Charity reigns in Heaven, and is the brighteſt Grace and Virtue in the Firmament of Glory, far outſhining all other; as St. *Paul*, who had himſelf been taken up into the third Heaven, does expreſly declare to us. Serm. 8.

Farther

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Vol. 8. Farther yet, this bleſſed ſtate conſiſts more particularly in theſe two things: In having our Bodies raiſed and refined to a far greater Purity and Perfection, than ever they had in this World; and in the conſequent Happineſs of the whole Man's Soul and Body, ſo ſtrictly and firmly united as never to be parted again, and ſo equally match'd as to be no trouble or impediment to one another.

(1.) In having our Bodies raiſed and refined to a far greater Purity and Perfection, than ever they had in this World. Our Bodies as they are now are unequally temper'd, and in a perpetual flux and change, continually tending to Corruption, becauſe made up of ſuch contrary Principles and Qualities, as by their perpetual conflict are always at work, conſpiring the Ruin and Diſſolution of them; but when they are raiſed again, they ſhall be ſo temper'd and ſo refin'd, as to be free from all thoſe deſtructive Qualities, which do now threaten their change and diſſolution; and tho' they ſhall ſtill conſiſt of Matter, yet

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yet it shall be purified to that degree, as to partake of the Immortality of our Souls, to which it shall be united, and to be of equal duration with them. So the Scripture tells us, 1 *Cor.* 15. 52, 53. *That our dead Bodies shall be raised incorruptible; for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.* Serm. 8.

Our Bodies when they are laid down in the Grave are vile Carcases, but they shall be raised again Beautiful and Glorious, and as different from what they were before, as the Heavenly Mansions in which they are to reside for ever are from that dark Cell of the Grave out of which they are raised, and shall then be endowed with such a Life and Strength and Vigour, as to be able without any change or decay to abide and continue for ever in the same state.

Our Bodies in this World are gross Flesh and Blood, liable to be affected with natural and sensual Pleasures, and to be afflicted with natural Pains and Diseases, to be prest with

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with the natural neceſſities of Hunger and Thirſt, and obnoxious to all thoſe Changes and Accidents to which all natural things are ſubject: But *they ſhall be raiſed ſpiritual bodies*, pure and refin'd from all the dregs of Matter; they ſhall not hunger, nor thirſt, nor be diſeaſed, or in Pain any more.

Theſe Houſes of Clay, whoſe Foundation is in the duſt, are continually decaying, and therefore ſtand in need of continual Reparation by Food and Phyſick: but *our Houſe which is from Heaven*, (as the Apoſtle calls it) ſhall be of ſuch laſting and durable Materials, as not only Time, but even Eternity it ſelf, ſhall make no impreſſion upon it, or cauſe the leaſt decay in it. *They* (ſays our Bleſſed Saviour) *who ſhall be accounted worthy to obtain that World, and the Reſurrection from the dead, cannot die any more: but ſhall be like the Angels, and are the children of God*, i. e. ſhall in ſome degree partake of the Felicity and Immortality of God himſelf, *who is always the ſame, and whoſe years fail not.* Nay, the Apoſtle expreſly tells us, that our Bodies after the Reſurrection ſhall be *ſpiritual*

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Spiritual Bodies, so that we shall then be as it were all Spirit, and our Bodies shall be so raised and refined, that they shall be no clog or impediment to the Operation of our Souls. And it must needs be a great comfort to us whilst we are in this World, to live in the hopes of so happy and glorious a change; when we consider how our Bodies do now oppress our Spirits, and what a melancholy and dead weight they are upon them, how grievous an Incumbrance and Trouble and Temptation they are for the most part to us in this mortal state. Serm. 8.

(2.) The blessedness of this state consists likewise in the consequent Happiness of the whole Man, Soul and Body, so strictly and firmly united as never to be parted again, and so equally matched as to be no trouble and impediment to one another.

In this World the Soul and Body are for the most part very unequally yoked, so that the Soul is not only darkned by the gross Fumes and Clouds which rise from the Body, but loaded and oppress by the dull weight of it, which it very heavily lugs on and draws after

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ter it; and the Soul likewiſe, and the vicious Inclinations and irregular Paſſions of it, have many times an ill influence upon the Body and the humours of it. But in the next World they ſhall both be purified, the one from Sin, and the other from Frailty and Corruption, and both admitted to the bleſſed ſight and enjoyment of the ever bleſſed God.

But the Conſideration of this, (as I ſaid before) is too big for our narrow apprehenſions in this mortal ſtate, and an Argument not fit to be treated of by ſuch Children, as the wiſeſt of men are in this World; and whenever we attempt to ſpeak of it, we do but liſp like Children, and underſtand like Children, and reaſon like Children about it. *That which is imperfect muſt be done away*, and our Souls muſt be raiſed to a greater Perfection, and our Underſtandings fill'd with a ſtronger and ſteadier Light, before we can be fit to engage in ſo profound a Contemplation. We muſt firſt have been in Heaven, and poſſeſt of that Felicity and Glory which is there to be enjoyed, before we

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we can either ſpeak or think of it in any meaſure as it deſerves. In the mean time, whenever we ſet about it, we ſhall find our Faculties oppreſt and dazled with the weight and ſplendor of ſo great and glorious an Argument; like St. *Paul*, who, when *he was caught up into Paradiſe*, ſaw and heard thoſe things which when he came down again into this World, he was not able to expreſs, and which it was not poſſible for the Tongue of Man to utter. Serm. 8.

So that in diſcourſing of the ſtate of the Bleſſed, we muſt content our ſelves with what the Scripture hath revealed in general concerning it; that it is a ſtate of perfect freedom from all thoſe Infirmities and Imperfections, thoſe Evils and Miſeries, thoſe Sins and Temptations which we are liable to in this World. So St. *John* deſcribes the Glory and Felicity of that ſtate, as they were in Viſions repreſented to him, *Rev.* 21. 2, 3, 4. *And I* John *ſaw the holy City, the new* Jeruſalem, *prepared as a Bride adorned for her Husband. And I heard a great voice out of Heaven, ſaying, Behold! the Tabernacle of God is with men, and he will*

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dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away; that is, all those Evils which we saw or suffered in this World, shall for ever vanish and disappear, and, which is the great Privilege and Felicity of all, that there shall no Sin be there, v. 27. *There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth*, and consequently there shall be no Misery and Curse there. So we read, *Chap.* 22. 3, 4. *And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face.* In which last words our Employment and our Happiness are expresst; but what in particular our Employment shall be, and wherein it shall consist, is impossible now to describe; it is sufficient to know in the general, that our Employment shall be our unspeakable Pleasure, and every way suitable to the Glory and Happiness of that state, and as much

much above the nobleſt and moſt delightful Employments of this World, as the Perfection of our Bodies, and the Powers of our Souls, ſhall then be above what they are now in this World. Serm. 8.

For there is no doubt, but that he who made us, and endued our Souls with a deſire of Immortality, and ſo large a Capacity of Happineſs, does underſtand very well by what way and means to make us happy, and hath in readineſs proper Exerciſes and Employments for that ſtate, and every way more fitted to make us Happy, than any Condition or Employment in this World is ſuitable to a temporal Happineſs; Employments that are ſuitable to *the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect*, united to Bodies purified and refined almoſt to the Condition of Spirits; Employments which we ſhall be ſo far from being weary of, that they ſhall miniſter to us a new and freſh delight to all Eternity; and this perhaps, not ſo much from the variety, as from the perpetual and growing Pleaſure of them.

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It is ſufficient for us to know this in the general, and to truſt the infinite Power and Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, for the particular manner and circumſtances of our Happineſs; not doubting but that he, who is the eternal and inexhauſtible Spring and Fountain of all Happineſs, can and will derive and convey ſuch a ſhare of it to every one of us as he thinks fit, and in ſuch ways as he, who beſt underſtands it, is beſt able to find out.

In a word, the Happineſs of the next Life ſhall be ſuch as is worthy of the great King of the World to beſtow upon his faithful Servants, and ſuch as is infinitely beyond the juſt Reward of their beſt Services; it is *to ſee God*, i. e. to contemplate and love the beſt and moſt perfect of Beings, and *to be for ever with the Lord, in whoſe preſence is fullneſs of joy, and at whoſe right hand there are pleaſures for evermore.*

I will ſay no more upon this Argument, leſt I ſhould ſay leſs, and becauſe

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becauſe whoever ventures to wade far into it, will ſoon find himſelf out of his depth, and in danger to be ſwallowed up and loſt in that great abyſs, which is not to be fathom'd by the ſhallow Faculties of Mortal men. Serm. 8.

I ſhall therefore only mention the

2. Thing I propoſed to ſpeak to, *viz.* The Eternity of this Happineſs; *And the end everlaſting life*; by which the Apoſtle intends to expreſs the utmoſt Perfection, but not the final Period of the Happineſs of good men in another World. For to a perfect ſtate of Happineſs theſe two Conditions are requiſite, that it be immutable, and that it be interminable, that it can neither admit of a change nor of an end. And this is all that I ſhall ſay of it, it being impoſſible to ſay any thing that is more intelligible and plain, concerning that which is infinite, than that it is ſo. I ſhould now have proceeded to the

II. Thing I propoſed, *viz.* By what Way and Means we may be prepared, and made meet to be made

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Vol. 8. partakers of this Happineſs; and that is, (as I have told you all along) by the conſtant and ſincere endeavour of an Holy and good Life; for the Text ſuppoſeth that they only who are *made free from Sin*, and *become the Servants of God*, and who *have their Fruit unto Holineſs*, are they whoſe *end* ſhall be *everlaſting Life*: But this is an Argument which I have had ſo frequent occaſion to ſpeak to, that I ſhall not now meddle with it. All that I ſhall do more at preſent ſhall be to make an Inference or two from what hath been ſaid upon this Argument.

I. The Conſideration of the Happy State of good men in another World, cannot be but a great comfort and ſupport to good men under all the Evils and Sufferings of this preſent Life. Hope is a great Cordial to the Minds of men, eſpecially when the thing hoped for does ſo vaſtly outweigh the preſent grievance and trouble. The Holy Scriptures, which reveal to us the Happineſs of our future ſtate, do likewiſe aſſure us that there is no compariſon between the Afflictions and

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and Sufferings of good men in this World, and the Reward of them in the other. *I reckon* (saith St. *Paul*) *Rom.* 8. 8. *that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.* Serm. 8.

Particularly the Consideration of that glorious change which shall be made in our Bodies at the Resurrection, ought to be a great comfort to us under all the Pains and Diseases which they are now liable to, and even against Death it self. One of the greatest burdens of Humane Nature, is the frailty and infirmity of our Bodies, the necessities which they are frequently prest withal, the Diseases and Pains to which they are liable, and *the fear of death*, by reason whereof a great part of Mankind are *subject to bondage*; against all which, this is an everlasting Spring of Consolation to us, that the time is coming when we shall have other sort of Bodies, freed from that burden of Corruption which we now groan under, and from all those Miseries and Inconveniences which Flesh and Blood are

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Vol. 8. are now ſubject to. For the time will come, when *theſe vile Bodies*, which we now wear, *ſhall be changed, and faſhioned like to the glorious Body of the Son of God*; and when they ſhall be raiſed at the laſt day, they ſhall not be raiſed ſuch as we laid them down, Vile and Corrruptible; but Immortal and Incorruptible: for the ſame Power which hath raiſed them up to Life, ſhall likewiſe change them, and put a glory upon them like to that of the glorified Body of our Lord; and when this glorious change is made, *when this corruptible hath put on incorruption, and this mortal hath put on immortality, then ſhall come to paſs the ſaying that is written, Death is ſwallowed up in victory*; and when this *laſt enemy* is perfectly ſubdued, we ſhall be ſet above all the Frailties and Dangers, all the Temptations and Sufferings of this mortal ſtate; there will then be no *fleſhly luſts* and brutiſh Paſſions *to War againſt the Soul*; no *law in our members* to riſe up in Rebellion againſt *the law of our minds*; no diſeaſes to torment us, no danger of Death to terrifie us; all the Motions and Paſſions of our outward

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ward Man ſhall then be perfectly ſubject to the Reaſon of our Minds, and our Bodies ſhall partake of the Immortality of our Souls. How ſhould this Conſideration bear us up under all the Evils of Life and the fears of Death, that the Reſurrection will be a perfect Cure of all our Infirmities and Diſeaſes, and an effectual Remedy of all the Evils that we now labour under; and that it is but a very little while that we ſhall be troubled with theſe Frail, and Mortal, and Vile Bodies, which ſhall ſhortly be laid in the duſt, and when they are raiſed again, ſhall become Spiritual, Incorruptible, and Glorious! Serm. 8.

And if our Bodies ſhall undergo ſo happy a change, what Happineſs may we imagine ſhall then be conferr'd upon our Souls, that ſo much better and nobler part of our ſelves! As the Apoſtle reaſons in another Caſe, *Doth God take care of Oxen?* Hath he this Conſideration of our Bodies, which are but the brutiſh part of the Man? What regard will he then have to his own Image, that ſpark of Divinity which is for ever to reſide in theſe Bodies?

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Bodies? If upon the account of our Souls, and for their sakes, our Bodies shall become *Incorruptible*, *Spiritual* and *Glorious*; then certainly our Souls shall be endued with far more Excellent and Divine Qualities: if our Bodies shall in some degree partake of the Perfection of our Souls in their Spiritual and Immortal Nature; to what a pitch of Perfection shall our Souls be raised and advanced! even to an equality with Angels, and to some kind of participation of the Divine Nature and Perfection, so far as a Creature is capable of them.

II. The Comparison which is here in the Text, and which I have largely explain'd, between the manifest Inconveniences of a Sinful and Vicious Course, and the manifold Advantages of an Holy and Virtuous Life, is a plain direction to us which of these two to chuse. So that I may make the same appeal that *Moses* does, after that he had at large declared the Blessings promis'd to the Obedience of God's Laws, and the Curse denounc'd against the Violation and Transgression of them, *Deut.* 30. 19. *I call Heaven and Earth*

to

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to record againſt you this day, that I have ſet before you life and death, bleſſing and curſing; therefore chuſe life, that you may be happy in Life and Death, and after Death to all Eternity. I know every one is ready to chuſe Happineſs, and to ſay with *Balaam*, *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his*: but if we do in good earneſt deſire the End, we muſt take the Way that leads to it; we muſt *become the Servants of God*, and *have our fruit unto holineſs*, if ever we expect, that *the end ſhall be everlaſting life.* Serm. 8.

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SERMON IX.

The Nature and Neceſſity of holy Reſolution.

The Firſt Sermon on this Text.

JOB XXXIV. 31, 32.

Surely it is meet to be ſaid unto God, I have born chaſtiſement, I will not offend any more: That which I ſee not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.

THESE words are the words of *Elihu*, one of *Job*'s Friends, and the only one who is not reproved for his Diſcourſe with *Job*, and who was probably the Author of this ancient and moſt eloquent Hiſtory

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Vol. 8. ry of *the ſufferings and patience of* Job, *and of the end which the Lord made with him*; and they contain in them a Deſcription of the temper and behaviour of a true Penitent. *Surely it is meet*, &c.

In which words we have the *Two* eſſential parts of a true Repentance.

Firſt, An humble Acknowledgment and Confeſſion of our Sins to God, *Surely it is meet to be ſaid unto God, I have born chaſtiſement.*

Secondly, A firm Purpoſe and Reſolution of amendment and forſaking of Sin for the future, *I will not offend any more; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.*

Firſt, An humble Acknowledgment and Confeſſion of our Sins to God; *Surely it is meet to be ſaid unto God, I have born chaſtiſement*, that is, have ſinned and been juſtly puniſh'd for it, and am now convinced of the Evil of Sin, and reſolved to leave it; *I have born chaſtiſement, I will offend no more.*

Of

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Serm. 9.

Of this *First* part of Repentance, *viz.* An humble Confession of our Sins to God, with great Shame and Sorrow for them, and a thorow Conviction of the Evil and Danger of a sinful Course, I have already treated at large. In these Repentance must begin, but it must not end in them: for a penitent Confession of our Sins to God, and a Conviction of the evil of them, signifies nothing, unless it bring us to a Resolution of amendment, that is, of leaving our Sins, and betaking our selves to a better Course: And this I intend, by God's assistance, to speak to now, as being the

Second Part of a true Repentance here described in the Text, *viz.* A firm Purpose and Resolution of amendment and forsaking of Sin for the future; and to express it the more strongly and emphatically, and to shew the firmness of the Resolution, it is repeated again; *I will not offend any more*; and then in the next verse, *If I have done iniquity, I will do no more.* And this is so necessary a part of Repentance, that herein the very essence

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Vol. 8. and formal Nature of Repentance does conſiſt, *viz.* in the firm and ſincere Purpoſe and Reſolution of a better Courſe.

In the handling of this Argument, I ſhall do theſe *Six* things.

I. I ſhall ſhew what Reſolution is in general.

II. What is the ſpecial Object of this kind of Reſolution.

III. What is implyed in a ſincere Reſolution of leaving our Sins and returning to God.

IV. I ſhall ſhew that in this Reſolution of Amendment, the very eſſence and formal Nature of Repentance does conſiſt.

V. I ſhall offer ſome Conſiderations to convince men, both of the neceſſity and fitneſs of this Reſolution, and of keeping ſtedfaſtly to it. *Surely it is meet to be ſaid unto God, I will not offend any more.*

VI. I

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Serm. 9.

VI. I shall add some brief directions concerning the managing and maintaining of this holy and necessary Resolution.

I. What Resolution in general is. It is a fixt Determination of the Will about any thing, either to do it, or not to do it, as upon due deliberation we have judged and concluded it to be necessary or convenient to be done, or not to be done by us: And this supposeth *three* things.

1. Resolution supposeth a precedent deliberation of the Mind about the thing to be resolved upon. For no prudent Man does determine or resolve upon any thing, till he have considered the thing, and weighed it well with himself, and have fully debated the necessity and expedience of it; what Advantage he shall have by the doing of it, and what danger and inconvenience will certainly or very probably redound to him by the neglect and omission of it. For peremptorily to determine and resolve upon any thing, before a Man have done this, is not

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properly Reſolution; but precipitancy and raſhneſs.

2. Reſolution ſuppoſeth ſome Judgment paſt upon the thing, after a Man hath thus deliberated about it; that he is ſatisfied in his Mind one way or other concerning it, that his Underſtanding is convinced either that it is neceſſary and convenient for him to do it, or that it is not; and this is ſometimes call'd Reſolution, but is not that Reſolution which immediately determines a man to action. This Judgment of the neceſſity and fitneſs of the thing, is not the Reſolution of the Will, but of the Underſtanding; for it does not ſignifie that a Man hath fully determined to do the thing, but that he hath determined with himſelf that it is reaſonable to be done, and that he is no longer in doubt and ſuſpence whether it be beſt for him to do it or not, but is in his Mind reſolved and ſatisfied one way or other. And theſe are two very different things; to be reſolved in one's Judgment, that is, to be convinced that a thing is fit and neceſſary to be done; and to be reſolved to ſet

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set upon the doing of it; for many men are thus convinced of the fitness and necessity of the thing, who yet have not the heart, cannot bring themselves to a firm and fixt Resolution to set upon the doing of it. So that an act of the Judgment, must go before the Resolution of the Will: for as he is rash that resolves to do a thing before he hath deliberated about it; so he is blind and wilful that resolves to do a thing before his Judgment be satisfied, whether it be best for him to do it or not. Serm. 9.

3. If the matter be of considerable moment and consequence, Resolution supposeth some motion of the Affections; which is a kind of Bias upon the Will, a certain Propension and Inclination that a Man feels in himself, either urging him to do a thing, or withdrawing him from it. Deliberation and Judgment they direct a Man what to do, or leave undone; the Affections excite and quicken a Man to take some Resolution in the matter, that is, to do suitably to the Judgment his Mind hath past upon the thing. For instance; A great

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ſinner reflects upon his Life, and conſiders what he hath done, what the Courſe is that he lives in, and what the iſſue and conſequence of it will probably or certainly be, whether it will make him happy or miſerable in the concluſion; and debating the Matter calmly and ſoberly with himſelf, he is ſatisfied and convinced of the Evil and Danger of a wicked Life, and conſequently that it is beſt for him to reſolve upon a better Courſe, that is, to repent. Now theſe thoughts muſt needs awaken in him fearful apprehenſions of the wrath of Almighty God, which is due to him for his Sins and hangs over him, and which he is every moment in danger of, if he goes on in his Evil Courſe. Theſe thoughts are apt likewiſe to fill him with Shame and Confuſion, at the remembrance of his horrible Ingratitude to God his Maker, his beſt Friend and greateſt Benefactor, and of his deſperate Folly in provoking Omnipotent Juſtice againſt himſelf; whereupon he is heartily grieved and troubled for what he hath done; and theſe Affections of Fear and Shame and Sorrow being once up, they come with

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with great violence upon the Will, and urge the Man to a speedy Resolution of changing his Course, and leaving the Way he is in, which he is fully convinced is so Evil and Dangerous, and of betaking himself to another Course, which he is fully satisfied will be much more for his Safety and Advantage. Serm. 9.

So that Resolution in general, is a fixt Determination of the Will; that is, such a Determination as is not only for the present free from all wavering and doubting, but such as cannot prudently be altered, so long as the reason remains. For the Man who upon full Deliberation and Conviction of his Mind resolves upon any thing, cannot without the imputation of fickleness and inconstancy quit that Resolution, so long as he hath the same Reason which he had when he took it up, and is still satisfied that the Reason is good. For instance; The Man who hath taken up a Resolution to be Sober, because of the uglines and unreasonableness of Drunkenness, and the temporal Inconveniences and Eternal Damnati-

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Vol. 8. on which that Sin exposeth a Man to; if these Reasons be true and good, can never prudently alter the Resolution which he hath taken, and return to that Sin again.

II. Let us consider what is the special Object or Matter of this Resolution, wherein the formal Nature of Repentance does consist, what it is that a Man when he repents resolves upon; and that I told you is to leave his Sin, and to return to God and his Duty; and this is the Resolution which the Penitent here described in the Text takes up, *I will not offend any more. That which I see not, teach thou me; and if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.* He resolves against all known Sin, *I will not offend any more*; and if through Ignorance he had sinned and done contrary to his Duty, he desires to be better instructed, that he may not offend again in the like kind, *That which I see not, teach thou me; and if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.*

So that the true Penitent resolves upon these *two* things.

1. To

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1. To forsake his Sin. And

2. To return to God and his Duty.

1. To forsake his Sin: and this implies the quitting of his sinful Course whatever it had been; and that not only by abstaining from the outward act and practice of every Sin, but by endeavouring to crucifie and subdue the inward Affection and Inclination to it.

And it implies farther, the utter forsaking of Sin; for Repentance is not only a Resolution to abstain from Sin for the present, but never to return to it again. Thus *Ephraim* when he repented of his Idolatry, he utterly renounced it, saying, *What have I to do any more with Idols?* Hos. 14. 8. He that truly repents, is resolved to break off his sinful Course, and to abandon those Lusts and Vices which he was formerly addicted to, and lived in.

2. The true Penitent resolves likewise to return to God and his Duty: he

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Vol. 8. he does not ſtay in the negative part of Religion, he does not only reſolve not to commit any Sin, but not to neglect or omit any thing that he knows to be his Duty; and if he has been ignorant of any part of his Duty, he is willing to know it, that he may do it; he is not only determined to forſake his Sin, which will make him miſerable, but to return to God, who alone can make him happy: he is now reſolved to love God, and to ſerve him as much as he hated and diſhonoured him before; and will now be as diligent to perform and practiſe all the Duties and Parts of Religion, as he was negligent of them before, and as ready to do all the good he can to all men in any kind, as he was careleſs of theſe things before: theſe in general are the things which a true Penitent reſolves upon. I proceed to the

III. Thing I propoſed to conſider, namely what is implyed in a ſincere Reſolution of leaving our Sins, and returning to God and our Duty. And this holy Reſolution, if it be thorow and ſincere, does imply in it theſe *three* things. 1. That

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1. That it be Universal.

2. That it be a Resolution of the Means as well as of the End.

3. That it presently come to effect, and be speedily and without delay put in Execution.

1. A sincere Resolution of amendment must be universal: a Resolution to forsake all Sin, and to return to our whole Duty, and every part of it; such a Resolution as that of holy *David*, *to hate every false way*, and *to have respect to all God's Commandments*.

This Resolution must be universal in respect of the whole Man, and with regard to all our Actions: in respect of the whole Man; for we must resolve not only to abstain from the outward Action of Sin, but this Resolution must have its effect upon our inward Man, and reach our very hearts and thoughts; it must restrain our inclinations, and *mortifie our lusts and corrupt affections*, and *renew us in the*

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Vol. 8. *the* very *ſpirit of our minds*, as the Apoſtle expreſſes it.

And it muſt be univerſal, in reſpect of all our Actions. For this is not the Reſolution of a ſincere Penitent, to abſtain only from groſs and notorious, from ſcandalous and open Sins; but likewiſe to refrain from the Commiſſion of thoſe Sins which are ſmall in the eſteem of men, and not branded with a Mark of publick Infamy and Reproach; to forbear Sin in ſecret, and when no Eye of Man ſees us and takes notice of us. This is not a ſincere Reſolution, to reſolve to practice the Duties and Virtues of Religion in publick, and to neglect them in private; to reſolve to perform the Duties of the firſt Table, and to paſs by thoſe of the ſecond; to reſolve to ſerve God, and to take a liberty to defraud and cozen men; to honour our Father which is in Heaven, and to injure and hate our Brethren upon Earth; *to love our Neighbour, and to hate our Enemy*, as the *Jews* did of old time; to reſolve againſt Swearing, and to allow our ſelves the liberty to ſpeak falſely, and to break our

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our Word; to flee from Superſtition, and to run into Faction; *to abhor Idols, and to commit Sacriledge*; to reſolve to be devout at Church, and deceitful in our Shops; to be very ſcrupulous about leſſer matters, and to be very zealous about indifferent things; *to tithe mint and aniſe and cummin, and to omit the weightier matters of the Law, Mercy and Fidelity and Juſtice*; to be very rigid in matters of Faith and Opinion, but looſe in Life and Practice. Serm. 9.

No; the Reſolution of a ſincere Penitent muſt be univerſal and uniform: it muſt extend alike to the forbearing of all Sin, and the exerciſe of every Grace and Virtue, and to the due Practice and Performance of every part of our Duty. The true Penitent muſt reſolve for the future to abſtain from all Sin, *to be holy in all manner of Converſation*, and *to abound in all the fruits of righteouſneſs, which by Jeſus Chriſt are to the praiſe and glory of God.* For if a Man do truly repent of his wicked Life, there is the very ſame Reaſon why he ſhould reſolve againſt all Sin, as why he ſhould reſolve

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ſolve againſt any; why he ſhould obſerve all the Commandments of God, as why he ſhould keep any one of them. For as St. *James* reaſons concerning him that wilfully breaks any one Commandment of God, that *he is guilty of all*, and *breaks the whole Law*; becauſe the Authority of God is equally ſtampt upon all his Laws, and is violated and contemned by the wilful tranſgreſſion of any one of them; *For he that hath ſaid, thou ſhalt not kill, hath likewiſe ſaid, thou ſhalt not commit adultery, and thou ſhalt not ſteal*: ſo he that reſolves againſt any one Sin, or upon Performance of any one part of his Duty, ought for the very ſame reaſon to make his Reſolution univerſal; becauſe one Sin is Evil and Provoking to God, as well as another; and the Performance of one part of our Duty good and pleaſing to him, as well as another, and there is no difference. So that he that reſolves againſt any Sin, upon wiſe and reaſonable gounds, becauſe of the Evil of it, and the danger of the wrath of God to which it expoſeth us, ought for the ſame reaſon to reſolve againſt all Sin; becauſe

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cauſe it is damnable *to commit adultery*, and *to ſteal*, as well as *to kill*; and that Reſolution againſt Sin, which is not univerſal, it is a plain Caſe that it is not true and ſincere, and that it was not taken up out of the ſenſe of the intrinſical evil of Sin, and the danger of it in reſpect of God and the Judgment of another World; (for this Reaſon holds againſt every Sin, and remains always the ſame) but that it was taken up upon ſome inferior Conſideration, either becauſe of the Shame and Infamy of it among men, or becauſe of ſome other temporal inconvenience, which if the Man could be ſecur'd againſt, he would preſently break his Reſolution, and return to the Commiſſion of that Sin, with as much freedom as any other. Serm. 9.

2. A ſincere Reſolution implies a Reſolution of the Means as well as of the End. He that is truly and honeſtly reſolved againſt any Sin, is likewiſe reſolved to avoid as much as is poſſible the Occaſions and Temptations which may lead or draw him to that Sin; or if they happen to preſent

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preſent themſelves to him, he is reſolved to ſtand upon his Guard and to reſiſt them. In like manner he that ſincerely reſolves upon doing his Duty in any kind, muſt reſolve upon the Means that are requiſite and neceſſary to the due Diſcharge and Performance of that Duty. As he that reſolves againſt that needleſs and uſeleſs Sin of Swearing in common Converſation, muſt reſolve alſo *to ſet a guard before the door of his lips*, ſeeing it is certain that it requires great care and attention, at leaſt for ſome competent time, to get rid of a habit.

When *David* reſolved *not to offend with his Tongue*, he reſolved at the ſame time to be very watchful over himſelf, *Pſal.* 39. 1. *I ſaid I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my Tongue: I will keep my mouth as with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.* For a Man to reſolve againſt any Sin or Vice, and yet to involve himſelf continually in the occaſions, and to run himſelf into the Company and Temptation which do naturally, and will almoſt neceſſarily lead and betray him into thoſe Sins, is a plain

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plain evidence of insincerity. This I take for a certain rule, that whatever can reasonably move a Man to resolve upon any End, will, if his Resolution be sincere and honest, determine him every whit as strongly to use all those Means which are necessary in order to that end. But of this I have spoken elsewhere. Serm. 9.

3. A sincere Resolution of leaving our Sins, and returning to God and our Duty, does imply the present time, and that we are to resolve speedily and without delay to put this Resolution in practice; that we are peremptorily determined not to go one step farther in the ways of Sin, not to neglect any Duty that God requires of us, not for one moment; but immediately and forthwith to set upon the practice of it, so soon as occasion and oportunity is offer'd to us. And the Reason of this is evident; Because the very same Considerations that prevail upon any Man to take up this Resolution of amendment, and changing the Course of his Life, are every whit as prevalent to engage him to put

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this Resolution presently in practice and execution.

I deny not, but a Man may resolve upon a thing for the future, and when the time comes, may execute his Resolution, and this Resolution may for all that be very sincere and real, tho' it was delayed to a certain time, because he did not see Reason to resolve to do the thing sooner: But it cannot be so in this Case of Repentance; because there can no good Reason be imagined, why a Man should resolve seven years hence to change his Course, and break off his sinful Life, but the very same Reason will hold as strongly, why he should do it presently and without delay; and over and besides this, there are a great many and powerful Reasons and Considerations, why he should rather put this good Resolution in present Execution, than put it off and defer it to any farther time whatsoever.

What is it that puts thee upon this Resolution of leaving thy Sins, and urgeth thee to do it at all? Art thou resolved to leave Sin, because it is so

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so great an Evil? Why it is so for the present; the Evil of it is intrinsical to it, and cleaves to the very Nature of it, and is never to be separated from it: so that this is a present Reason, and as strong against it now, as ever it will be hereafter: nay it is stronger at present; because if it be so great an Evil, the sooner we leave it, the better. Serm. 9.

Or dost thou resolve to forsake Sin, because thou art apprehensive of the danger and mischief of it, that it will expose thee to the wrath of God, and to the endless and intolerable Misery of another World? Why this Reason likewise makes much more for the present leaving of it; because the longer thou continuest in a sinful and impenitent state, the greater is thy danger, and the greater Penalty thou wilt most certainly incur; by delaying to put this good Resolution in Practice, thou dost increase and multiply the Causes of thy Fear. For hereby thou provokest God more, and every day dost incense his wrath more and more against thee; thou preparest more and more fewel for

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Vol. 8. *everlasting burnings*, and *treasurest up for thy self* more *wrath, against the day of wrath, and the Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God.* Nay thou dost not only increase and aggravate; but thou dost hereby hasten thine own Misery and Ruine, and takest the most effectual Course that is possible, to bring thine own Fears, and the Vengeance of Almighty God, so much the sooner upon thee. For nothing provokes God to take a speedier course with sinners, and does more quicken the pace of his Judgments, than wilful continuance in Sin.

And yet farther; If thy Resolution be valuable and considerable to thee, thou takest the most effectual course in the World to frustrate and defeat it. Thou art fully resolved to leave thy Sins hereafter, and thou thinkest thou hast Reason for it: but by continuing in them for the present, thou provokest the Justice of almighty God to cut thee off, before thy Resolution hath taken effect.

Again; Dost thou resolve to leave thy Sins one time or other, because thereby

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thereby thou hopest to put thy self into a Capacity of Pardon and Mercy, and of Eternal Life and Happiness? Why this Reason should move thee to do the thing as soon as is possible; because the sooner thou forsakest thy Sins, thou hast the greater hope of finding Mercy and Forgivness with God; and the sooner thou beginnest a Holy Course, and the longer thou continuest therein, thou hast Reason to expect a greater and more ample Reward. Thou canst not by holding off, hope to bring down Pardon and Mercy to lower Rates, and to obtain these hereafter upon easier Terms: no; the Terms and Conditions of God's Mercy are already fixt and establish'd, so as never to be alter'd. Serm. 9.

So that whatever Reason thou canst possibly allege for taking up this Resolution, it is every whit as forcible and powerful to perswade thee to put it speedily in Execution.

And then there is this Reason besides, and that a very considerable one, why thou shouldest immediate-

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Vol. 8. ly put this Reſolution in practice, and not delay it for a moment. Thou may'ſt at preſent do it much more certainly, and much more eaſily. Much more certainly; becauſe thou art ſurer of the preſent time, than thou canſt be of the future. The preſent is in thy Power: but not one moment more. And thou may'ſt at preſent do it more eaſily; for the longer thou continueſt in Sin, thy Reſolution againſt it will ſtill grow weaker, and the habit of Sin continually ſtronger. Thou wilt every day be more enſlaved by the Power of thy Luſts, and thy heart will every day be more *hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin.* All the change that time makes, will ſtill be for the worſe, and more to thy diſadvantage. Sin will be as pleaſant to thee hereafter, and thou more loth to leave it, than at preſent. Sin was never mortified by Age. It will every day have more ſtrength to bind thee and hold thee faſt, and thou wilt every day have leſs to break looſe from it. For by every Sin thou doſt commit, thou addeſt a new degree to the ſtrength and force of it; and ſo much ſtrength as thou addeſt

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to it, so much thou takest from thy self, and so much thou losest of thine own Power and Liberty. For a Man and his Lusts are like Nature and a Disease: so much strength as the Disease gains, Nature loseth, and the Man is hereby doubly weakned: for he does not only lose so much of his own strength; but the Enemy gets it. Serm. 9.

Nay thou dost hereby likewise forfeit that auxiliary strength and assistance which the Grace of God is ready to afford to men, his restraining and his preventing Grace. For as a Man goes on in Sin, and advanceth in an evil Course, the Grace of God draws off by degrees, and his Holy Spirit doth insensibly leave him: and when a sinner is come to this, his best Resolutions will *vanish like the morning cloud, and the early dew, which passeth away.*

So that it cannot be a true and sincere Resolution of leaving our Sins, if it do not take place, and have not its effect presently. For there is no Man that takes up a Resolution, upon weighty and considerable Reasons,

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Vol. 8. of doing any thing; but if the Reasons upon which he takes it up urge him to do the thing at present, he will presently set about it: and that Man is not resolved to do a thing, whatever he may pretend, who hath most Reason to do it at present, and may best do it now, and yet delays it.

And thus I have opened to you the Nature of this holy Resolution of leaving our Sins, and returning to God and our Duty; and have shewn what is necessarily implyed in such a Resolution, if it be sincere and in good earnest; That it be Universal; and that it be a Resolution of the Means, as well as of the End; and that it presently take place and be put in Execution. And these are *three* the best Signs and Marks that I know of, whereby a Man may try and examine the truth and sincerity of that Resolution of Amendment, which we call Repentance. If it be against all Sin, and have an equal regard to every part of our Duty; if when we resolve upon the End, that is to avoid Sin, and to perform our Duty, we are equally resolved upon

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upon the Means that are neceſſary to thoſe Ends; if the Reſolution we have taken up commence preſently, and from that day forward be duly executed and put in practice, then is our Repentance and Reſolution of Amendment ſincere: but if there be a defect in any of theſe, our Reſolution is not as it ought to be. Serm. 8.

SER-

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SERMON X.

The Nature and Neceſſity of holy Reſolution.

The Second Sermon on this Text.

JOB XXXIV. 31, 32.

Surely it is meet to be ſaid unto God, I have born chaſtiſement, I will not offend any more. That which I ſee not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.

THESE words are the Deſcription of the temper and behaviour of a true Penitent, and do contain in them the *two* eſſential parts of a true Repentance.

Firſt,

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Firſt, An humble Acknowledgment and Confeſſion of Sin.

Secondly, A firm Purpoſe and Reſolution of amendment and forſaking our Sins for the future.

And this latter is ſo neceſſary a part of Repentance, that herein the very Eſſence and formal Nature of Repentance does conſiſt. In handling of this Argument, I propoſed to conſider,

I. What Reſolution in general is.

II. What is the ſpecial Object or Matter of this kind of Reſolution.

III. What is implyed in a ſincere Reſolution of leaving our Sins, and returning to God and our Duty.

IV. To ſhew that in this Reſolution of amendment, the very Eſſence and formal Nature of Repentance doth conſiſt.

V. To

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Ser. 10.

V. To offer ſome Conſiderations to convince men of the neceſſity and fitneſs of this Reſolution, and of keeping ſtedfaſt to it.

VI. To add ſome Directions concerning the managing and maintaining this holy Reſolution. The *three* firſt I have ſpoken to, I now proceed to the

IV. To ſhew that in this Reſolution the very Eſſence and formal Nature of Repentance doth conſiſt. A Man may do many reaſonable Actions, without an explicit Reſolution. In things that are more eaſie and natural to us, Judgment and Reſolution are all one; it is all one to judge a thing fit to be done, and to reſolve to do it. But in matters of difficulty, when a Man is to ſtrive againſt the Stream, and to oppoſe ſtrong Habits that have taken deep root, there is nothing to be done without an explicit Reſolution. No Man makes any remarkable change in his Life, ſo as to croſs his Inclinations and Cuſtom, without an expreſs Reſolution. For tho' a Man's

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Man's Judgment be never so much convinced of the reasonableness and necessity of such a change; yet unless a Man's Spirit be fortified and fixt by Resolution, the power of Custom, and the violence of his own Inclinations will carry him against his Judgment. Now there is no change of a Man's Life can be imagined, wherein a Man offers greater violence to inveterate Habits, and to the strong Propensions of his present temper, than in this of Repentance. So that among all the Actions of a Man's Life, there is none that doth more necessarily require an express Purpose, than Repentance does.

And that herein Repentance doth chiefly consist, I shall endeavour to make evident from Scripture, and from the common apprehensions of Mankind concerning Repentance.

The Scripture, besides the several descriptions of Repentance, useth two words to express it to us, μεταμέλεια and μετάνοια. The former properly signifies the inward trouble and displeasure which men conceive against themselves, for having done amiss; which if

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if it be κατὰ Θεὸν λύπη, *a godly ſorrow,* it worketh in us μετάνοιαν ἀμεταμέλητον, as St. *Paul* calls it, *a Repentance not to be repented of,* that is, ſuch a change of our Minds, which as we ſhall have no Cauſe to be troubled at, ſo no Reaſon to alter afterwards. And what is this, but a firm, ſtedfaſt, and unalterable Reſolution? Ser. 10.

The Scripture likewiſe uſeth ſeveral Phraſes of the like importance, to deſcribe Repentance by; as *forſaking* and *turning from ſin,* and *converſion* and *turning to God. Forſaking* and *turning from ſin.* Hence it is call'd *Repentance from dead works,* Heb. 6. 1. and *turning to God,* Acts 26. 20. *I have ſhewed to the Gentiles, that they ſhould repent and turn to God,* that is, from the worſhip of Idols, to the true God. And we have both theſe together in the deſcription which the Prophet gives of Repentance, *Iſa.* 55. 7. *Let the wicked forſake his ways, and the unrighteous Man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord.* Now this change begins in the ſinners Reſolution of doing this; and the *unrighteous Man's forſaking his thoughts,*

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Vol. 8. *thoughts*, is nothing else but changing the purpose of his Mind, and resolving upon a better Course. And thus *Lactantius* describes it: *Agere autem pœnitentiam nihil aliud est, quam affirmare & profiteri se non amplius peccaturum. To repent is nothing else, but for a Man to declare and profess that he will sin no more.* This is Repentance before men. And Repentance before God, is a Resolution answerable to this Profession. And elsewhere saith the same Author, *The Greeks do most fully express Repentance by the word* μετάνοια, *because he that repents recovers his mind from his former folly, and is troubled at it,* & confirmat animam suam ad rectius vivendum, *and confirms his mind for a better Course.* And how is this done but by Resolution?

And that this is the natural and true notion of Repentance appears, in that the Heathens did consent and agree in it. *Gellius* gives this description of it. *Pœnitere tum dicere solemus, cum quæ ipsi fecimus, ea nobis post incipiunt displicere, sententiamque in iis nostram demutamus. We are said then to repent, when those things which we have*

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have done begin afterwards to displease us, and we change our Resolution about them. And so likewise one of the Philosophers describes it; *Repentance is the beginning of Philosophy, a flying from foolish words and actions,* καὶ τῆς ἀμεταμελήτου ζωῆς ἡ πρώτη παρασκευή, *and the first preparation of a life not to be repented of.* Ser. 10.

It is true indeed, Repentance supposeth the entire change of our Lives and Actions, and a continued state, as the proper consequence of it: but Repentance is but the beginning of this change, which takes its rise from the Purpose and Resolution of our Minds; and if it be sincere and firm, it will certainly have this effect, to change our Lives; and if it be not so, it is not Repentance. For tho' in the Nature of the thing it be possible, that a Man may sincerely resolve upon a thing, and yet let fall his Resolution afterwards, before it come into Act: yet in the Phrase of Scripture, nothing is call'd Repentance, but such a Resolution as takes effect, so soon as there is oportunity for it. If we change our Resolution, and repent of our Repen-

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tance, this is not that which St. *Paul* calls *Repentance unto Salvation.* So that no Man that reads and conſiders the Bible, can impoſe upon himſelf ſo groſly, as to conceit himſelf a true Penitent, and conſequently to be in a ſtate of Salvation, who hath been troubled for his Sins, and hath taken up a Reſolution to leave them, if he do not purſue this Reſolution, and act according to it.

V. I ſhall in the next place propound ſome Arguments and Conſiderations to perſwade men to this holy Reſolution, and then to keep them firm and ſtedfaſt to it, ſo as never to change it after they have once taken it up.

Firſt, I ſhall propound ſome Arguments to perſwade men to take up this Reſolution; and they are theſe.

1. Conſider that this Reſolution of Repentance, is nothing but what, under the influence of God's Grace and holy Spirit, which are never wanting to the ſincere endeavours of men, is in your Power. And it is neceſſary to

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to premise this; for unless this be clear'd, all the other Arguments that I can use will signifie nothing. For nothing in the World could be more vain, than to take a great deal of pains to perswade men to do a thing which they cannot do, to entreat them to attempt an Impossibility, and to urge and solicite them with all earnestness and importunity to do that which is absolutely and altogether out of their Power. All the Commands of God, and the Exhortations of his Word, and all the Promises and Threatnings, whereby these Commands and Exhortations are enforced, do plainly suppose, either that it is in our Power to do the thing which God Commands or Exhorts us to; or else, if it be not (which I grant it is not) that God is ready by his Grace and Strength, if we be not wanting to our selves, to assist and enable us to those Ends and Purposes. For the Gospel supposeth a Power going along with it, and that the holy Spirit of God works upon the Minds of Men, to quicken and excite and assist them to their Duty. And if it were not so, the Exhortations of

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Vol. 8. Preachers would be nothing else, but a cruel and bitter mocking of sinners, and an Ironical insulting over the misery and weakness of poor Creatures; and for Ministers to Preach, or People to hear Sermons, upon other Terms, would be the vainest expence of time, and the idlest thing we do all the week; and all our Dissuasives from Sin, and Exhortations to Holiness and a good Life, and vehement Perswasions of men to strive to get to Heaven and to escape Hell, would be just as if one should urge a blind Man, by many Reasons and Arguments taken from the Advantages of Sight, and the Comfort of that Sense, and the Beauty of external Objects, by all means to open his Eyes, and to behold the delights of Nature, to see his way, and to look to his steps, and should upbraid him, and be very angry with him for not doing so. Why, if Resolution be absolutely impossible to us, and a thing wholly out of our Power, it is just the same Case. But then we ought to deal plainly and openly with men, and to tell them, that what we so earnestly perswade them to, is that which we certainly

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certainly know they cannot do. So that it is necessary, if I intend that the following Considerations should do any good, to assure men, that it is not impossible for them to make a Resolution of leaving their Sins, and returning to God. Ser. 10.

It is a Power which every Man is naturally invested withal, *to Consider*, and *Judge*, and *Chuse*. To *Consider*, that is, to weigh and compair things together. To *Judge*, that is, to determine which is best. And *to Chuse*, that is, to resolve to do it or not. And there is nothing more evident and more universally acknowledged in temporal Cases, and in the Affairs and Concernments of this Life. In these matters Resolution is a thing ordinary and of frequent practice; it is the Principle of all great and considerable Actions. Men resolve to be great in this World, and by Virtue of this Resolution, when they have once taken it up, what industry will they not use! what hazards will they not run in the pursuit of their Ambitious Designs! Difficulties and Dangers do rather whet their

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Vol. 8. Courage, and set an edge upon their Spirits. Men resolve to be rich; the Apostle speaks of some *that will be rich*, 1 Tim. 6. *They that will be rich*: and tho' this be but a low and mean Design, yet these Persons, by Virtue of this Resolution, will toil and take prodigious pains in it.

And as to Spiritual things, every Man hath the same Power radically, that is, he hath the Faculties of Understanding and Will; but these are obstructed and hinder'd in their exercise, and strongly byassed a contrary way by the Power of Evil Inclinations and Habits; so that as to the exercise of this Power, and the effect of it in Spiritual things, men are in a sort as much disabled, as if they were destitute of it. For 'tis in effect all one, to have no Understanding at all to consider things that are Spiritual, as to have the Understanding blinded by an invincible prejudice; to have no Liberty as to Spiritual things, as to have the Will strongly byassed against them. For a Man that hath this prejudice upon his Understanding, and this byass upon his Will, it is to all intents

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intents and purposes as if he were destitute of these Faculties. But then we are not to Understand this Impotency to be absolutely natural, but accidental; not to be in the first Frame and Constitution of our Souls, but to have hapned upon the depravation of Nature. It is not a want of natural Faculties, but the binding of them up and hindring their Operations to certain purposes. This Impotency proceeds from the Power of evil Habits. And thus the Scripture expresseth it, and compares an Impotency arising from bad Habits and Customs to a natural Impossibility; nothing coming nearer to Nature, than a powerful Custom. *Can the* Ethiopian *change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots? Then may ye also, that are accustomed to do evil, learn to do well.* Ser. 10.

But now God by the Gospel hath designed the Recovery of Mankind from the slavery of Sin, and the Power of their Lusts; and therefore, as by the death of Christ he hath provided a way to remove the guilt of Sin, so by the Spirit of Christ he furnish-

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eth us with sufficient Power to destroy the dominion of Sin. I say *sufficient*, if we be not wanting to our selves, but be *workers together with God*, and be as diligent *to work out our own salvation*, as he is ready *to work in us both to will and to do*.

So that when we perswade men to repent and change their Lives, and to resolve upon a better Course, we do not exhort them to any thing that is absolutely out of their Power; but to what they may do, tho' not of themselves, yet by the Grace of God, which is always ready to assist them, unless by their former gross neglects and long obstinacy in an evil Course, they have provoked God to withdraw his Grace from them. So that tho' considering our own strength abstractedly, and separately from the Grace of God, these things be not in our Power; yet the Grace of God puts them into our Power.

And this is so far from derogating from the Grace of God, that it is highly to the Praise of it. For if the Grace of God make us able to repent and resolve

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ſolve upon a new Life, he that aſ- Ser. 10.
ſerts this does not attribute his Repentance to himſelf, but to the Grace of God: nay he that ſays that God's Grace excites, and is ready to aſſiſt men to do what God Commands, repreſents God immenſely more good and gracious, than he that ſays that God Commands men to do that which by their natural Power they cannot do, and will condemn them for not doing it, and yet denies them that Grace which is neceſſary to the doing of it.

Let this then be eſtabliſh'd as a neceſſary Conſideration to prevent diſcouragement, that to reſolve upon the change of our Lives, is that which by the Grace of God we are enabled to do, if we will. Reſolution is no ſtrange and extraordinary thing; it is one of the moſt common Acts that belongs to us as we are men; but we do not ordinarily apply it to the beſt purpoſes. It is not ſo ordinary for men to reſolve to be good, as to be rich and great; not ſo common for men to reſolve againſt Sin, as to reſolve againſt Poverty and Suffering. It is not ſo uſual for men to reſolve to keep

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keep a good Conscience, as to keep a good Place. Indeed our corrupt Nature is much more opposite to this holy kind of Resolution. But then to balance and answer this, God hath promised greater and more immediate assistance to us in this case, than in any other. There is a general blessing and common assistance promised to Resolution and Diligence about temporal things; and God's Providence doth often advance such Persons to riches and honour. *The diligent hand, with God's blessing, makes rich,* as *Solomon* tell us, *Prov.* 10. 4. and 22, 19. *Seest thou* (says he) *a Man diligent in business? He shall stand before Princes, he shall not stand before mean Persons.* Now diligence is the effect of a great and vigorous Resolution. But there is a special and extraordinary blessing and assistance, that attends the Resolution and Endeavour of a holy Life. God hath not promised *to strengthen* men *with all might* in the way to Riches and Honours, and to assist the ambitious and covetous designers of this World, with *a mighty and glorious Power, such as raised up Jesus from the Dead*: but this he hath promised to

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to thoſe, who with a firm Purpoſe and Reſolution do engage in the ways of Religion. Let us then ſhake off our ſloth and liſtleſneſs, and in that ſtrength and aſſiſtance which God offers, let us reſolve to leave our Sins, and to amend our Lives. Ser. 10.

2. Conſider what it is that you are to reſolve upon; to leave your Sins, and to return to God and Goodneſs. So that the things I am perſwading you to reſolve upon, are the ſtrongeſt Reaſons that can be for ſuch a Reſolution. Sin is ſuch a thing, that there can be no better Argument to make men reſolve againſt it, than to conſider what it is, and to think ſeriouſly of the Nature and Conſequence of it. And God and Goodneſs are ſo amiable and deſirable, that the very propoſal of theſe Objects hath invitations and allurements enough to inflame our deſires after them, and to make us ruſh into the embraces of them. If we would but enter into the ſerious Conſideration of them, we ſhould ſoon be reſolved in our Minds about them.

Do

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Vol. 8. Do but conſider a little what Sin is. It is the ſhame and blemiſh of thy Nature, the reproach and diſgrace of thy Underſtanding and Reaſon, the great deformity and diſeaſe of thy Soul, and the eternal Enemy of thy Reſt and Peace. It is thy Shackles and thy Fetters, the Tyrant that oppreſſes thee and reſtrains thee of thy Liberty, and Condemns thee to the baſeſt Slavery and the vileſt Drudgery. It is the unnatural and violent ſtate of thy Soul, the *Worm* that perpetually *gnaws* thy Conſcience, the cauſe of all thy Fears and Troubles, and of all the Evils and Miſeries, all the Miſchiefs and Diſorders that are in the World; it is the Foundation and Fewel of Hell; it is that which puts thee out of the Poſſeſſion and Enjoyment of thy ſelf, which doth alienate and ſeparate thee from God the Fountain of Bliſs and Happineſs, which provokes him to be thine Enemy, and lays thee open every moment to the fierce revenge of his Juſtice, and if thou doſt perſiſt and continue in it, will finally ſink and oppreſs thee under the inſupportable weight of his wrath, and make

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make thee ſo weary of thy ſelf, that thou ſhalt wiſh a thouſand times that thou hadſt never been; and will render thee ſo perfectly miſerable, that thou wouldeſt eſteem it a great Happineſs to exchange thy Condition with the moſt wretched and forlorn Perſon that ever lived upon Earth, to be perpetually upon a Rack, and to lie down for ever under the rage of all the moſt violent Diſeaſes and Pains that ever afflicted Mankind. Sin is all this which I have deſcribed, and will certainly bring upon thee all thoſe Evils and Miſchiefs which I have mentioned, and make thee far more miſerable than I am able to expreſs, or thou to conceive. And art thou not yet reſolved to leave it? Shall I need to uſe any other Arguments to ſet thee againſt it, and to take thee off from the Love and Practice of it, than this Repreſentation which I have now made of the horrible Nature and Conſequences of it? Ser. 10.

And then conſider on the other Hand, what it is that I am perſwading thee to turn to; to thy God and Duty. And would not this be a bleſſed

bleſſed change indeed! To leave the greateſt Evil, and to turn to the chief Good! For this Reſolution of returning to God, is nothing elſe but a Reſolution to be wiſe and happy, and to put thy ſelf into the Poſſeſſion of that which is a greater good, if it is poſſible, than Sin is an Evil, and will render thee more happy, than Sin can make thee miſerable. Didſt thou but think what God is, and what he will be to thee, if thou wilt return to him, how kindly he will receive thee after all thy wandrings from him *days without number*, thou wouldſt ſoon take up the Reſolution of the Prodigal, and ſay, *I will ariſe and go to my Father.*

And conſider likewiſe what it is to return to thy Duty. It is nothing elſe but to do what becomes thee, and what is ſuitable to the Original Frame of thy Nature, and to the trueſt dictates of thy Reaſon and Conſcience, and what is not more thy Duty, than it is thy Intereſt and thy Happineſs. For that which God requires of us, is to be righteous and holy and good, that is, to be like God himſelf, who is

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is the Pattern of all Perfection and Happiness. It is to have our Lives conformed to his Will, which is always perfect holiness and goodness, a state of Peace and Tranquillity, and the very temper and disposition of Happiness. It is that which is a principal and most essential Ingredient into the Felicity of the Divine Nature, and without which God would not be what he is, but a deformed and imperfect and miserable Being.

And if this be a true Representation which I have made to you, of Sin and Vice on the one Hand, and of God and Goodness on the other, what can be more powerful than the serious Consideration of it, to engage us to a speedy Resolution of leaving our Sins, and of *turning* and *cleaving to the Lord with full purpose of heart?* After this we cannot but conclude with the Penitent in the Text; *Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I will not offend any more: That which I see not, teach thou me*; and *if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.*

3. Con-

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3. Conſider how unreaſonable it is to be unreſolved in a Caſe of ſo great moment and concernment. There is no greater Argument of a Man's weakneſs, than Irreſolution in matters of mighty conſequence, when both the Importance of the thing, and Exigency of preſent circumſtances require a ſpeedy Reſolution. We ſhould account it a ſtrange folly, for a Man to be unreſolved in the cleareſt and plaineſt matters that concern his temporal welfare and ſafety. If a Man could not determine himſelf whether he ſhould eat or ſtarve; if he were dangerouſly ſick, and could not determine whether he ſhould take Phyſick or Die; or if one that were in Priſon, could not reſolve himſelf whether he ſhould accept of Liberty, and be contented to be releaſed; or if a fair Eſtate were offer'd to him, he ſhould deſire ſeven years time to conſider whether he ſhould take it or not; this would be ſo abſurd in the common affairs of Life, that a Man would be thought infatuated, that ſhould be doubtful and unreſolved in caſes ſo plain, and of ſuch preſſing concernment.

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ment. If a Man were under the Sentence and Condemnation of the Law, and liable to be executed upon the least intimation of the Prince's Pleasure, and a Pardon were graciously offer'd to him, with this intimation, that this would probably be the last offer of Mercy that ever would be made to him; one would think that in this Case a Man should soon be determined what to do; or rather that he should not need to deliberate at all about it; because there is no danger of rashness in making haste to save his Life. Ser. 10.

And yet the Case of a sinner is of far greater importance, and much more depends upon it, infinitely more than any temporal Concernment whatsoever can amount to, even our Happiness or Misery to all Eternity. And can there be any difficulty, for a Man to be resolved what is to be done in such a Case? No Case surely in the World can be plainer than this; Whether a Man should leave his Sins, and return to God and his Duty, or not, that is, whether a Man should chuse to be happy or miserable, unspeak-

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ably and everlastingly happy, or extremely and eternally miserable.

And the circumstances and exigences of our Case do call for a speedy and peremptory Resolution in this matter. The Sentence of the Law is already past, and God may execute it upon thee every moment, and it is great Mercy and Forbearance not to do it. Thy Life is uncertain, and thou art liable every minute to be snatch'd away and hurried out of this World. However at the best, thou hast but a little time to resolve in; Death and Judgment and Eternity cannot be far off, and for ought thou knowest they may be even at the door. Thou art upon the matter just ready to be seized upon by Death, to be summon'd to Judgment: And to be swallowed up of Eternity: And is it not yet time thinkest thou to resolve? Would'st thou have yet a little longer time to deliberate, whether thou should'st repent and forsake thy Sins, or not? If there were difficulty in the Case, or if there were no danger in the delay; if thou couldst gain time, or any thing else, by suspending thy Resolution; there were

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were then some Reason why thou should'st not make a sudden Determination. But thou canst pretend none of these. It is evident at first sight, what is best to be done, and nothing can make it plainer. It is not a matter so clear and out of Controversie, that Riches are better than Poverty, and Ease better than Pain, and Life more desirable than Death; as it is, that it is better to break off our Sins, than to continue in the Practice of them; to be reconciled to God, than to go on to provoke him; to be Holy and Virtuous, than to be Wicked and Vicious; to be *Heirs of eternal Glory*, than to be *Vessels of wrath fitted for Destruction.* Ser. 10.

And there is infinite danger in these delays. For if thy Soul be any thing to thee, thou venturest that; if thou hast any tenderness and regard for thy eternal Interest, thou runnest the hazard of that; if Heaven and Hell be any thing to thee, thou incurrest the danger of losing the one, and falling into the other.

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Vol. 8. And thou gaineſt nothing by continuing unreſolved. If Death and Judgment would tarry thy leiſure, and wait till thou hadſt brought thy thoughts to ſome iſſue, and wert reſolved what to do, it were ſomething: but thy Irreſolution in this matter will be ſo far from keeping back Death and Judgment, that it will both haſten and aggravate them, both make them to come the ſooner, and to be the heavier when they come: becauſe thou abuſeſt the goodneſs of God, and *deſpiſeſt his patience and long-ſuffering, which ſhould lead thee* and draw thee on *to Repentance*, and not keep thee back. Hereby thou encourageſt thy ſelf in thy lewd and riotous courſes, and, becauſe *thy Lord delayeth his coming*, art the more negligent and extravagant. Hear what doom our Lord pronounceth upon ſuch *ſlothful and wicked ſervants*, Luke 12. 46. *The Lord of that ſervant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in ſunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.* None ſo like to be ſurprized, and

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and to be severely handled by the Justice of God, as those that trifle with his Patience. Ser. 10.

4. Consider how much Resolution would tend to the settling of our Minds, and making our Lives comfortable. There is nothing that perplexeth and disquieteth a Man more, than to be unresolved in the great and important Concernments of his Life. What anxiety and confusion is there in our Spirits, whilst we are doubtful and undetermined about such matters? How are we divided and distracted, when our Reason and Judgment direct us one way; and our Lusts and Affections bias us to the contrary? When we are convinced and satisfied what is best for us; and yet are disaffected to our own Interest. Such a Man is all the while self-condemned, and acts with the perpetual regret of his Reason and Conscience; and when ever he reflects upon himself, he is offended and angry with himself, his Life and all his Actions are uneasie and displeasing to him; and there is no way for this Man to be

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Vol. 8. at peace, but to put an end to this conflict one way or other, either by conquering his Reaſon or his Will. The former is very difficult, nothing being harder than for a ſinner to lay his Conſcience aſleep, after it is once throughly awaken'd; he may charm it for a while, but every little occaſion will rouze it again, and renew his Trouble; ſo that tho' a Man may have ſome Truce with his Conſcience, yet he can never come to a firm and ſettled Peace this way: but if by a vigorous Reſolution a Man would but Conquer his Will, his Mind would be at reſt, and there would be a preſent calm in his Spirit. And why ſhould we be ſuch enemies to our own Peace, and to the Comfort and Contentment of our Lives, as not to take this courſe, and thereby rid our ſelves at once of that, which really and at the bottom is the ground of all the trouble and diſquiet of our Lives?

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SERMON XI.

The Nature and Neceſſity of holy Reſolution.

The Third Sermon on this Text.

JOB XXXIV. 31, 32.

Surely it is meet to be ſaid unto God, I have born chaſtiſement, I will not offend any more. That which I ſee not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.

THESE words are a Deſcription of the temper and behaviour of a true Penitent, his Confeſſion of Sins, and, Reſolution of Amendment. Concerning Reſolution I have ſhewn what it is in general: What

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Vol. 8. is the special Object or Matter of this kind of Resolution: What is implyed in a sincere Resolution of leaving our Sins, and returning to God and our Duty: That in this Resolution the very Essence and formal Nature of Repentance doth consist: And have offer'd some Considerations, to convince men of the necessity and fitness of this Resolution, and to keep them stedfast to it. As,

1. That this Resolution is nothing but what under the influence of God's Grace is in our Power.

2. The things themselves, which we are to resolve upon, are the strongest Arguments that can be for such a Resolution.

3. How unreasonable it is for men to be unresolved in a Case of so great moment.

4. How much this Resolution will tend to the settling of our Minds, and making our Lives Comfortable. I proceed to the Considerations which remain.

5. Then

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5. Then be pleased to consider, that a strong and vigorous Resolution would make the whole Work of Religion easie to us, it would conquer all difficulties which attend a Holy and Religious Course of Life, especially at our first entrance into it: Because Resolution brings our Minds to a Point, and unites all the strength and force of our Souls in one great Design, and makes us vigorous and firm, couragious and constant in the Prosecution of it; and without this it is impossible to hold out long, and to resist the strong Propensions and Inclinations of our corrupt Nature, which, if we be not firmly resolved, will return and by degrees gain upon us; it will be impossible to break through Temptations, and to gain-say the importunity of them; when the Devil and the World solicit us, we shall not be able to say them nay, but shall be apt to yield to them.

There are many, who have had faint wishes and cold desires, and half purposes of leading a new and better Life: but having not taken up a firm Reso-

Resolution in the Case, having not determined themselves by a severe purpose, a little thing sways them, and brings them back to their former Course; 'tis no hard matter to divert them and engage them another way; they are *shaken with every wind* of Temptation, every little blast of Opposition and Persecution turns them back, and carries them to the ways of Sin: whereas Resolution fixeth a Man's Spirit, and makes it most stedfast and unmovable, and sets him upon *a Rock*, which, *when the winds blow, and the rain falls, and the floods come*, abides firm against all impressions.

If I would give the most probable and useful advice to engage and continue a Man in a good Course, I would commend to him a deliberate and firm Resolution. *David* proved this way with very happy success, *Psal.* 119. 106. *I have sworn* (says he) *and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous Judgments.* This was a security to him against all assaults, and nothing could turn him from his Course afterwards; not the dangers he was

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was exposed to, *v.* 109. *My soul is continually in my hand, yet do I not forget thy Law*; not the snares of wicked men that were laid for him, *v.* 110. *The wicked have laid a snare for me, yet I erred not from thy precepts.* By virtue of this Resolution he could rise up in defiance of all those that would have tempted him to any sinful action, *v.* 115. *Depart from me ye evil doers: for I will keep the Commandments of my God.* Ser. 11.

When a Man is thus resolved upon a holy Course, he is not easily diverted from it, and is able to resist the importunity and flattery of Temptations, and to say to them, as men are wont to do, when they are fully and firmly resolved upon any thing; *Let me alone, I am not to be moved, it is in vain to urge me, I am resolved to the contrary.* Thus stiff and resolute men can be in other Cases, where there is not near that Cause and Reason for it: and if we would but take up a generous Resolution to break off our Sins, and to live better Lives, this would be the way to conquer that listlesness and unwillingness, which hinders

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hinders us from engaging in a good Course, and is the cause of so many lame excuses and unreasonable delays. It is the want of Resolution, and the weakness of our Resolutions, which is the true Reason why we are not more equal and constant and uniform in the ways of Religion; but are religious only by fits and starts, in a heat, and during some present Trouble and Conviction of Mind. *The double minded Man is unstable*, says St. *James*, *in all his ways*. When a Man is of several Minds, he is easily moved one way or other.

6. And *lastly*, Consider the infinite danger of remaining unresolved. *The evil day* may *overtake you*, while you are deliberating whether you should avoid it or not. A state of Sin is liable to so many hazards, hath so many dangers continually threatning it, and hanging over it, that it is the most imprudent thing in the World to linger in it. It is like *Lot's* staying in *Sodom*, when the Lord was going to destroy it, when Fire and Brimstone were just ready to be rained down from Heaven upon it. Whilst men

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men are lingring in a sinful state, if *the Lord be not merciful to them*, they will be consumed. Therefore it concerns thee Sinner, to determine thy self speedily, and to make haste out of this dangerous Condition, *to escape for thy Life, lest some evil overtake thee*, and lest Death finding thee unresolved, determine thy case for thee, and put it out of all doubt, and past all remedy. Ser. 11.

How many have been cut off in their Irresolution? And because they would not determine what to do, God hath concluded their case for them, and *sworn in his wrath, that they should not enter into his rest.* It may be thou promisest thy self the space of many years to resolve in: *Thou fool, this night thy soul* may *be required of thee*, and whilst thou art unresolved what to do, God is resolving what to do with thee, and putting a Period to his Patience and long expectation of thy Repentance: and thou knowest not how soon God may do this, and make an immutable Determination concerning thee. And wo unto

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unto thee, when God hath resolved thus.

Suppose thou shouldst be snatched out of the World, and hurried before the dreadful Tribunal of God, in this doubtful and unresolved state. And this is possible enough; because thou hast no certain tenure of thy Life, thou art at no time secured from the stroke of Death: Nay it is probable enough; because thou art every moment liable to ten thousand accidents, any one of which may snap in sunder the thread of thy Life. And suppose this should happen to thee, what dost thou imagine would become of thee? Wouldst not thou then wish a thousand times, that thou hadst resolved in time? How glad wouldst thou then be, that it were possible for thee to retrieve and call back but *one* of those *days without number*, which thou hast so vainly trifled away, that thou mightest resolve upon *the things of thy peace*: but *thou wouldst not* do it *in that thy day*, which God afforded thee to this purpose; thou hast let the opportunity slip out of thy hands, and it will never

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ver be in thy Power again, but *the things of thy peace will be* for ever *hid from thine eyes.*

Why wilt thou then be so foolish, as to run thy self upon the evident hazard of losing Heaven, and being miserable for ever? Why wilt thou make work for a sadder and longer Repentance, than that which thou dost now so carefully decline? This was the case of *the foolish Virgins* in the Parable, *Matth.* 25. who made account to be ready *to meet the Bridegroom* at his coming, but took no care in time to get *Oyl into their Lamps.* They thought the Bridegroom would *tarry* yet a while longer, and therefore *they slumbered and slept* in great security: but *at mid-night*, when *the cry was made, Behold the Bridegroom cometh*; then they *arose*, and in a great hurry and confusion went about *trimming their Lamps*; they were resolved then, they would have begged or bought Oyl, and would have been at any pains and cost for it: but then it was too late; for *the door was* suddenly *shut* against them, and

and no importunity could prevail to have it opened to them.

Canst thou be contented to have *the Door shut* against thee, and when thou shalt cry, *Lord open unto me*, to have him return this answer, *Depart from me, I know thee not?* If thou canst not; resolve to prevent this in time.

Didst thou but see, and know, and feel, what the miserable do in Hell, thou couldst not linger thus, thou couldst not continue so long unresolved? Why the time will come, when thou wilt reflect severely upon thy self, and say, That I should ever be so stupid and sottish, to be unresolved in a matter of such infinite concernment to me? How often was I admonish'd and convinced of the necessity of changing my course? How many inward Motions had I to that purpose? How often did my own Reason and Conscience, and the holy Spirit of God, by his frequent and friendly suggestions, put me upon this? How often was I just upon the brink of resolving? I resolved to resolve; but still I delayed it till Death seized

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seized upon me unresolved: and now the opportunity is lost, and never to be recover'd again. I would not in time resolve to be wise and happy: and now by the Sentence of the just and unchangeable God, it is resolved that I must be miserable to all Eternity. Ser. 11.

How should these Considerations quicken us, who have yet these opportunities in our Hands; which those those who neglected and trifled them away would now purchase at any rate! I say how should these Considerations which I have proposed, move us to take up a present Resolution in the matter! Consider these things, Sinner, and lay them seriously to Heart, and say to thy self, Fool that I have been; to be unresolved so long; not to determine my self in a matter of such mighty consequence; to continue so long in suspence, whether I had best go to Heaven or Hell, and which was most advisable to be happy or miserable for ever! Blessed be God that hath been pleased to exercise so much Patience and Long-suffering towards me, that hath spared me so long;

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Vol. 8. when he might have taken me away, and cut me off unreſolved. My Soul lies at ſtake, and for ought I know all Eternity depends upon my preſent and ſpeedy Reſolution. And now by God's Grace I will not delay one moment more, I will hang no longer between Heaven and Hell. I ſhall now in the

Second place, offer ſome Conſiderations to perſwade thoſe that have taken up this good Reſolution, to purſue it, and to promote it to Practice and Execution, and to keep firm and ſtedfaſt to it. And to this end, be pleaſed to conſider theſe *three* things,

1. What an Argument it is of vanity and inconſtancy, to change this Reſolution, whilſt the Reaſon of it ſtands good and is not changed. I ſuppoſe that thou wert once reſolved to leave thy Sins, and to return to God and thy Duty. Why doſt thou not purſue this Reſolution? Why doſt thou not perſiſt in it? Surely there appeared to thee ſome Reaſon why thou didſt take it up; and if the Reaſon remain, and appear ſtill the ſame to

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to thee that it did, How comes it to pass that thou hast alter'd thy Mind, and changed thy Purpose? Either the Case is the same it was, when thou tookest up this Resolution; or it is not. If it be altered, then thou hast Reason to change thy Resolution: if it be not, thou hast the same Reason to continue in it, that thou hadst to take it up. Shew then, if thou canst, wherein it is changed. Wert thou mistaken before about the Nature of Sin, and the pernicious consequences of it; or about the Nature of God and Goodness? Hast thou any thing now to plead for Sin, which thou didst not know or consider before? Art thou now satisfied that Sin is not so evil and unreasonable a thing, as thou didst once apprehend, or that it does not threaten thee with so much danger as thou didst fear? Hath God alter'd his opinion of it, or is he become more favourable to it than he was? Hast thou received any news lately from Heaven by any good Hands, that God hath reverst his threatnings against Sin, or that he hath adjourn'd the Judgment of the World, *sine die*, without any set time? That he hath Ser. 11.

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ſet the Devils at Liberty, and releaſt them from their Chains of darkneſs, and hath quenched and put out the fire of Hell? Or art thou ſatisfied that there is no ſuch Being as God in the World, or that he is not ſo good as thou didſt apprehend him to be, or that he will not reward thoſe that diligently ſerve him? Haſt thou found upon Tryal, that Holineſs and Virtue are but empty Names, and that there is nothing in them? That there is not that Pleaſure and Peace in keeping the Commandments of God, which thou wert told of? I am ſure thou canſt not with Reaſon pretend any thing of all this. Thy Reaſon and Conſcience and Experience cannot ſpeak one word on the behalf of Sin, or give any Teſtemony againſt God and his holy ways. And if the Caſe be the ſame it was, nothing but thine own vanity and ficklenels, or ſome worſe Reaſon, could move thee to alter thy purpoſe.

2. Let it be farther conſidered, That if we be not conſtant to our Reſolution, all we have done is loſt. If thou repenteſt of thy Repentance, it will not prove *a Repentance to Salvation.*

As

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As good to have stayed in *Sodom*, as to look back after thou art come out of it. Thus God tells us by the Prophet *Ezek.* 33. 12, 13. *Therefore thou son of Man, say unto the children of thy People, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression; neither shall the righteous be able to live in the day that he sinneth. When I say to the righteous, He shall surely live: if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembred: but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.* So that whatever we have done in the Work of Repentance, what Resolutions soever we have taken up; if afterwards we give over and let them fall, all that we have done is lost, and will come to nothing. Ser. 11

3. Let us consider in the last place, that if we be not constant to our Resolution, we shall not only lose all that we have done, but we shall thereby render our Condition much worse. *Remember Lot's Wife*, who, after she was escaped out of *Sodom*, look't back, and was made a particular and

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laſting monument of God's wrath and diſpleaſure; which ſeems to be meant by that expreſſion of her being *turned into a Pillar of Salt*, that is, *a laſting monument*. Prov. 14. 14. *The backſlider in heart ſhall be filled with his own ways. Shall be filled with his own ways*; this expreſſion doth ſignifie a moſt heavy and dreadful curſe upon thoſe, who fall off from their good Purpoſe and Reſolution, that they ſhall have Sorrow and Trouble enough upon it. For ſo likewiſe *Prov.* 1. 26, 27. where God threatens wilful and obſtinate Sinners with the heavieſt Judgments, that he would *laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear comes, when their fear comes as deſolation, and their deſtruction as a whirl-wind, and fear and anguiſh cometh upon them*; he adds, as the ſum of all other Judgments, that *they ſhall eat the fruit of their own ways, and be filled with their own devices.* Heb. 10. 38. *But if any Man draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him*; which words are a μειωσις and ſignifie a great deal more than ſeems to be expreſt, *My ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him*, that is, let ſuch an one expect

pect the effects of God's fierceſt wrath and diſpleaſure. For ſo the *Hebrews* are wont to expreſs things that are great and unſpeakable; when they cannot ſufficiently ſet them forth, by ſaying leſs, they ſay more. So *Pſal.* 5. 4. Where it is ſaid, *Thou art not a God that haſt pleaſure in wickedneſs*, the *Pſalmiſt* means, and would have us to underſtand it ſo, that God is ſo far from taking any Pleaſure in the Sins of men, that he bears the moſt violent hatred and diſpleaſure againſt them. So when the Apoſtle here ſays, *If any Man draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him*, he means, that it is not to be expreſt how God will deal with ſuch Perſons, and how ſeverely his Juſtice will handle them. To the ſame purpoſe is that Declaration, 2 *Pet.* 2. 20, 21. *For if after they have eſcaped the Pollutions of the World, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worſe with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them, not to have known the way of righteouſneſs, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy Com-*

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mandment delivered unto them. The condition of all impenitent ſinners is very ſad; but of Apoſtates much worſe: not only becauſe the Sins which they commit afterwards are much greater, receiving a new aggravation, which the Sins of thoſe who are ſimply impenitent are not capable of; but likewiſe, becauſe ſuch Perſons are uſually more wicked afterwards. For they that break looſe from ſevere Purpoſes and Reſolutions of a better Courſe, do by this very thing in a great meaſure ſear and conquer their Conſciences; and then no wonder if afterwards *they give up themſelves to commit all iniquity with greediueſs.* When after long abſtinence men return to Sin again, their Luſts are more fierce and violent; like a Man who, after long faſting, returns to his meat with a more raging appetite. This our Saviour ſets forth to us in the Parable of the unclean Spirit's returning again and taking poſſeſſion of the Man, after he had left him, *Matth.* 12. 43, 44, 45. *When the unclean Spirit is gone out of a Man, he walketh through dry places, ſeeking reſt, and findeth none. Then he ſaith, I will return into my Houſe*

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House from whence I came out: And when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnisht. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other Spirits more wicked than himself; and the end of that Man is worse than his beginning. The Moral of which is, that when a Man hath once left his Sins, if afterward he entertain thoughts of returning to them again, Sin will return upon him with redoubled force and strength, and his Heart will be but so much the more prepared and disposed for the entertaining of more and greater Vices, and his leaving his Sins for a time will be but like a running back, that he may leap with greater violence into Hell and Destruction. Ser. II.

Besides that such Persons do the greatest injury to God and the holy ways of Religion, that can be, by forsaking them after they have owned and approved them. For it will not be so much regarded, what wicked men, who have always been so, talk against God and Religion; because they do not talk from Experience, but *speak evil of the things which they know*

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know not: whereas those who forsake the ways of Religion after they have once engaged in them, do disparage Religion more effectually, and reproach it with greater Advantage; because they pretend to speak from the Experience they have had of it; they have tryed both the ways of Sin, and the ways of Religion, and after Experience of both, they return to Sin again; which, what is it but to Proclaim to the World, that the ways of Sin and Vice are rather to be chosen than the ways of Holiness and Virtue; that the Devil is a better Master than God, and that a sinful and wicked Life yields more Pleasure and greater Advantages, than are to be had in keeping the Commandments of God? And this must needs be a high Provocation, and a heavy Aggravation of our Ruin. Let these Considerations prevail with us, to pursue this holy Resolution, after we have taken it up, and to persist in it. There remains only the

VI. And *last* particular which I proposed to be spoken to, *viz.* To add some directions for the maintaining

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ing and making good of this Reſolution of Repentance and Amendment; and they ſhall be theſe *three*.

1. Let us do all in the ſtrength of God, conſidering our neceſſary and eſſential dependance upon him, and that *without him* and the aſſiſtance of his Grace *we can do nothing*. *We are not* (as the Apoſtle tells us) *ſufficient of our ſelves, as of our ſelves*, that is, without the aſſiſtance of God's holy Spirit, *to think any thing* that is good; much leſs to reſolve upon it. *It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleaſure*, that is, of his own goodneſs, as the ſame Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Phil.* 2. 13. It is God that upholds us in Being, and from whom we have all our Power as to natural Actions: but as to ſpiritual things, conſidering the great Corruption and Depravation of Humane Nature, we ſtand in need of a more eſpecial and immediate aſſiſtance.

If we know any thing of our ſelves, we cannot but know what fooliſh and ignorant Creatures we are, how weak and impotent, how averſe and

Vol. 8. and oppoſite to any thing that is good. And therefore it is wiſe counſel in all Caſes, but chiefly in ſpiritual Matters, which *Solomon* gives, *Prov.* 3. 5, 6. *Truſt in the Lord with all thine Heart, and lean not to thine own underſtanding. Acknowledge him in all thy ways: and he ſhall direct thy ſteps.* Let us then addreſs our ſelves to God, in the words of the holy Prophet, *Jer.* 10. 23. *O Lord, I know that the way of Man is not in himſelf, and that it is not in Man that walketh, to direct his ſteps.* And let us beg of him, that he would conſider our Caſe, commiſerate our weakneſs, and pity our impotency, and that he would joyn his ſtrength to us, and grant us the aſſiſtance of his Grace and holy Spirit, to put us upon ſincere Reſolutions of a new Life, and to keep us conſtant and ſtedfaſt to them; *to open the Eyes of our Minds, and to turn us from darkneſs to light, and from the Power of Satan and our Luſts, unto God; that we may repent and turn to God, and do works meet for Repentance, that ſo we may receive forgiveneſs of Sins, and an Inheritance*

tance among them that are sanctified through faith that is in Christ. Ser. 11.

And for our Encouragement in this matter, God hath bid us to apply our selves to him, and he hath promised not to be wanting to us, in words as express and universal as can well be devised, *Jam.* 1. 6. *If any Man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth no Man: but let him ask in Faith, nothing wavering,* that is, not doubting but that God is both able and willing to give what he asks. And *Luke* 11. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. *I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. If a Son shall ask bread of any of you that is a Father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a Serpent? Or if he shall ask an Egg, will he offer him a Scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children;*

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dren: how much more ſhall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him? To encourage our Faith, our Saviour uſeth ſuch an Argument as may give us the greateſt aſſurance. We are commonly confident, that our earthly Parents will not deny us thoſe things, that are good and neceſſary for us, tho' *they* may be otherwiſe evil: *how much more then ſhall our heavenly Father*, who is eſſentially and infinitely good, *give his holy Spirit to us*? And if this be not enough, St. *Matthew* uſeth a larger expreſſion, *How much more ſhall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask him*? If there be any thing that is good, and we ſtand in need of it, and earneſtly pray to God for it, we may be confident that he will give it us.

2. We ought to be very watchful over our ſelves, conſidering our weakneſs and wavering and inſtability and fickleneſs, the treachery and deceitfulneſs of our own Hearts, and the malice of Satan. It will be a great while before the Habits of

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of Sin be ſo weakned and ſubdued, as that we ſhall have no Propenſion to return to them again; ſo that our Hearts will be often endeavouring to return to their former poſture, and *like a deceitful Bow*, which is not firmly ſtrong, *to ſtart back*. And beſides the deceitfulneſs of Sin and our own Hearts, the Devil is very malicious, and his malice will make him vigilant to watch all Advantages againſt us; and his great deſign will be to ſhake our Reſolution; for if that ſtand, he knows his Kingdom will fall, and therefore he raiſeth all his Batteries againſt this Fort, and labours by all means to undermine it, and nothing will be matter of greater Triumph to him, than to gain a Perſon that was revolted from him, and reſolved to leave his Service. If therefore thou expecteſt God's Grace and Aſſiſtance to keep thee ſtedfaſt to thy Reſolution, do not neglect thy ſelf, but *keep thy Heart with all diligence*, and watch carefully over thy ſelf: for becauſe *God worketh in us both to will and to do*, therefore he expects that *we ſhould work* Ser. II.

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Vol. 8. *work out our Salvation with fear and trembling*, leſt by our own careleſneſs and neglect we ſhould miſcarry.

3. Let us frequently renew and reinforce our Reſolutions, more eſpecially when we think of coming to the Sacrament, and approaching the holy Table of the Lord. Nothing is more apt to beget in us good Reſolutions, and to ſtrengthen them, than to conſider the dreadful Sufferings of the Son of God for our Sins, which are ſo lively ſet forth and repreſented to us in this holy Sacrament, which as it is on God's part, a Seal and Confirmation of his Grace and Love to us, ſo on our parts, it ought to be a ſolemn Ratification of our Covenant with God, *to depart from iniquity*, and *to walk before him in holineſs and righteouſneſs all the days of our Lives.*

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SERMON XII.

The Nature and Neceſſity of Reſtitution.

The Firſt Sermon on this Text.

LUKE XIX. 8, 9.

And if I have taken any thing from any Man by falſe accuſation, I reſtore him fourfold. And Jeſus ſaid unto him, This day is Salvation come to this Houſe.

ONE particular and eminent Fruit of true Repentance, is the making of Reſtitution and Satisfaction to thoſe whom we have injured. As for God, we can make no Satisfaction and Compenſation to him, for

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Vol. 8. the injuries we have done him by our Sins; all that we can do in reſpect of God, is to confeſs our Sins to him, to make acknowledgment of our Miſcarriages, to be heartily trroubled for what we have done, and not to do the like for the future. But for Injuries done to men, we may in many Caſes make Reparation and Satisfaction. And this, as it is one of the beſt ſigns and evidences of a true Repentance; ſo it is one of the moſt proper and genuine effects of it: for this is as much as in us lies, to undo what we have done, and to unſin our Sins.

But, becauſe the practice of this Duty doth ſo interfere with the Intereſt of men, and conſequently it will be very difficult to convince men of their Duty in this particular, and to perſwade them to it; therefore I deſign to handle this particular Fruit and Effect of a true Repentance by it ſelf, from theſe words, which contain in them,

I. The Fruit and Effect of *Zacheus* his Converſion and Repentance; *If*

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I have taken any thing from any Man, I reſtore him fourfold. Ser. 12.

II. The Declaration which our Saviour makes hereupon, of the truth of his Repentance and Converſion, and the happy ſtate he was thereby put into. *And Jeſus ſaid unto him, This day is Salvation come to this Houſe, for as much as he alſo is the Son of Abraham*; as if he had ſaid, By theſe Fruits and Effects it appears, that this is a Repentance to Salvation; and this Man whom you look upon as a ſinner and a heathen, may by better right call *Abraham Father*, than any of you formal Phariſees and *Jews*, who glory ſo much in being *the children of* Abraham.

I. The Fruit and Effect of *Zacheus*'s Converſion and Repentance; *If*, &c.

This *Zacheus*, as you find at the 2d. *verſe*, was Chief of the Publicans, which was an Office of great Odium and Infamy among the *Jews*, they being the Collectors of the Tribute which the *Roman* Emperor, under whoſe Power the *Jews* then were,

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did exact from them. And becauſe theſe Publicans farmed this Tribute of the Emperour at a certain Rent, they made a gain out of it to themſelves, by exacting and requiring more of the People than was due upon that account; ſo that their calling was very infamous, upon *three* accounts.

1. Becauſe they were the Inſtruments of oppreſſing their Country-men; for ſo they looked upon the Tax they paid to the *Romans*, as a great oppreſſion.

2. Becauſe they were forced by the Neceſſity of their calling to have familiar Converſation with Heathens, whom they lookt upon as ſinners. Hence the Phraſe uſed by the Apoſtle, of *Sinners of the Gentiles*. And hence likewiſe probably it is, that *Publicans and Sinners*, *Publicans and Heathen*, are joyned ſeveral times together, becauſe of the occaſions of frequent Converſe which the Publicans had with Heathens.

3. But

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3. But principally they were odi- Ser. 12.
ous, because of the common injustice and oppression, which they used in the management of their Calling, by fraud and violence extorting more than was due, to inhance the profit of their Places. Hence it is, that this sort of Officers have been generally branded, and reckoned among the worst sort of men. So he in the Comedy, πάντες πλῶται, πάντες ἐσὺν ἁρπαγες, *all Publicans are Rapacious or Robbers.* And this is most probably the Sin which *Zacheus* here repents of, and in regard to which he promises Restitution, κὴ εἴ τινός τι συκοφάντησα, *And if I have taken any thing from any Man by false accusation*; so we render the words in our Translation: but the word συκοφάντησα signifies more generally, *If I have been injurious to any one, if I have wronged any Man*, as appears by the constant use of this word by the LXX, who by this word do translate the most general *Hebrew* words, which signifie any kind of Injury or Oppression, either by fraud or violence or calumny. So that there is no Reason here

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Vol. 8. to reſtrain it, to *wronging men by falſe accuſation*: for *Zacheus* his Sin being in all probability extorting more than was due, this might as eaſily be done many other ways, as *by falſe accuſation*. And that this was the common Sin of the Publicans, appears by the Counſel which *John* the Baptiſt gives them, *Luke* 3. 12, 13. *Then came alſo the Publicans to be Baptized, and ſaid unto him, Maſter, what ſhall we do? And he ſaid unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you*; that is, do not by fraud or violence extort from any Man, any more than the Tribute which is laid upon him.

So that *Zacheus* here promiſeth, that if he had been injurious to any Man in his Office, by extorting more than was due, he would reſtore to him fourfold. And if *Zacheus* calculated his Eſtate right, and intended to reſerve any part of it to himſelf, which is but reaſonable to ſuppoſe; it could be no very great part of his Eſtate which was injuriouſly got; and I am afraid a far ſmaller proportion than many are guilty of, who yet paſs for very honeſt men in compariſon

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pariſon of the Publicans. The Text ſaith, he was *a rich Man.* Suppoſe he was worth ten or twelve thouſand Pounds; half he gives to the Poor; That was well got, or elſe his whole Eſtate could not have made fourfold Reſtitution for it. Suppoſe he reſerved a thouſand or two to himſelf, then at the rate of reſtoring *fourfold*, not above a thouſand can be injuriouſly got, that is about a Penny in the Shilling. I am afraid that now a-days there are few ſuch moderate Oppreſſors: nay, it is poſſible the proportion of his Eſtate injuriouſly got might be much leſs: more it could not eaſily be. But whatever it was, he does not plead that by way of excuſe for himſelf; he freely confeſſeth he had ſinned in this kind, and offers Reſtitution to the utmoſt, much more than the Law did require in ſuch Caſes. Ser. 12.

II. You have the Declaration our Saviour makes hereupon, of the truth of his Repentance and Converſion, and the happy ſtate he was thereby put into, *This day is Salvation come to this Houſe.*

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Vol. 8. The *Obſervation* I ſhall make from hence is this, That Reſtitution and Satisfaction for the Injuries we have done to others, is a proper and genuine Effect of true Repentance. I know the Text only ſpeaks of Reſtitution in Caſe of Oppreſſion and Exaction: but becauſe there is the ſame Reaſon why Reſtitution ſhould be made for all other Injuries, I think I may without any force or violence to my Text, very well make it the Foundation of a more general Diſcourſe concerning Reſtitution.

In the handling of this, I ſhall,

Firſt, Open to you the Nature of this Duty.

Secondly, Confirm the truth of the Propoſition, by ſhewing the Neceſſity of it.

Thirdly, Endeavour to perſwade men to the diſcharge of this Neceſſary Duty.

Firſt, For

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Firſt. For the opening the Nature of this Duty, I will conſider,

I. The Act.

II. The Latitude or Extent of the Object, as I may call it, or the Matter about which it is converſant.

III. The Manner how it is to be done.

IV. The Meaſure of it.

V. The Perſons who are bound to make Reſtitution; and to whom it is to be made.

VI. The time in which it is to be done.

VII. The Order of doing it, where more are injured, and Reſtitution cannot be made at once to all.

I. For the Act. Reſtitution is nothing elſe but the making Reparation or Satisfaction to another, for the Injuries we have done him. It is to reſtore

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Vol. 8. reſtore a Man to the good Condition, from which, contrary to Right and to our Duty, we have removed him. Reſtitution is only done in Caſe of Injury. Another Man may be damaged and prejudiced by us many ways, and we not be bound to make Reſtitution; becauſe there are many Caſes, wherein a Man deſerves the prejudice we do to him. As when we are Inſtruments of inflicting upon a Man the Puniſhment which the Law doth Sentence him to. And there are many Caſes wherein we may be prejudicial to others, and cannot help it. As a Man that is ſick of a Contagious Diſeaſe, may infect others that are about him: but he is not injurious to them; becauſe it is not his fault, but his infelicity.

II. For the Latitude and Extent of the Object, as I may call it, or the matter about which it is Converſant. It extends to all kind of Injuries, which may be reduced to theſe *two* Heads, either we injure a Perſon with or without his conſent.

1. Some

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1. Some Injuries are done to Perſons with their Conſent. Such are moſt of thoſe Injuries which are done to the Souls of men, when we command, or counſel, or incourage them to Sin, or draw them in by our Example. For the Maxim *Volenti non fit injuria, There's no injury done to a Man that is willing*, is not ſo to be underſtood, as that a Man may not in ſome ſort conſent to his own wrong: for abſolute freedom and willingneſs ſuppoſeth that a Man is wholly left to himſelf, and that he underſtands fully what he does. And in this Senſe no Man Sins willingly, that is, perfectly knowing and actually conſidering what he does; and Commands, and Perſwaſion, and Example are a kind of Violence: but none of theſe hinder, but that a Man in theſe Caſes may ſufficiently conſent to what he does. But yet he is not ſo perfectly free, as to excuſe him that draws him into Sin by theſe ways. So likewiſe when a Man refuſeth to do that which is his Duty without a Reward; for inſtance, to do Juſtice to another; he is injurious in ſo doing: but yet not altoge-

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altogether without the conſent of him whom he injures.

2. Injuries are done to Perſons without their conſent. And theſe, tho' are not always the greateſt Michiefs, yet they are the greateſt Injuries. And theſe Injuries are done either by fraud and cunning, or by violence and oppreſſion; either by over-reaching another Man in Wit, or overbearing him by Power. And theſe uſually either reſpect the Bodies of men, or their Eſtates, or their good Name. The Bodies of men. He that maims another, or does him any other Injury in his Limbs or Health, either by fraud or force, is bound, ſo far as he is able, to make Reparation for the Injury. Or they reſpect the Eſtates of men. If by cunning, or by violence, or by falſe Teſtimony or Accuſation, thou haſt hinder'd a Man of any Benefit, which otherwiſe would have come to him, thou art bound to Reſtitution. If by thy Power or Intereſt, by thy knowledge in the Law, or skill in Buſineſs, thou haſt directly and avowedly helped and aſſiſted another to do Injuſtice to

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to his Neighbour, thou art bound to Reſtitution; tho' not as the principal, yet as the acceſſory. If thou haſt over-reached thy Brother in any Contract, making Advantage of his ignorance or unskilfulneſs; if thou haſt made a gain of his Neceſſity; if thou haſt by thy Power and Intereſt, or by any more violent and forcible way detained his Right, or taken away that which was his; thou art bound to make Reparation for theſe Injuries, to reſtore that which thou haſt borrowed, to return the pledge which thou haſt wrongfully kept, to releaſe unconſcionable Forfeitures, to pay debts, to make ſatisfaction for frauds and cheats, to take off all unjuſt invaſions and ſurprizals of Eſtates: yea tho' the fraud be ſuch that thou art not liable to make ſatisfaction by any Humane Law, yet thou art as much bound to it in Conſcience to God and thy Duty, as if thou hadſt ſtolen it, or taken it by violence from thy Neighbour. For in truth and reality, fraud is as great an Injury as violence, altho' Humane Laws cannot take Cognizance of it, ſo as to relieve every Man that is over-reached in a Bargain, Ser. 12.

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Vol. 8. Bargain: nay of the two it is worse; for whenever thou decievest a Man in this kind, thou dost not only wrong him in Point of Estate, but thou abusest his Understanding.

And so likewise in respect of a Man's Fame and Reputation. If thou hast hurt any Man's good Name by slander or calumny, by false witness, by rendring him ridiculous, or any other way; thou art bound to give such Satisfaction as the thing is capable of; or if there be any other Injury which I have not mentioned, thou art obliged to make Reparation for it.

III. As to the manner how Restitution is to be made.

1. Thou art bound to do it voluntarily, and of thy own accord; tho' the Person injured do not know, who it was that did him the Injury, tho' he do not seek Reparation by Law. When a Man is forced by Law to make Restitution, it is not a Virtue, but Necessity; this is not a Fruit of Repentance and a good Mind, but of

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of good Law. And that thou dost not do it, unless the Law compel thee to it, is an Argument thou wouldst not have done it, if thou couldst have avoided it. And tho' the thing be done, yet *thou* hast not done it, but *the Law*; and unless thou heartily repent of thy Crime, the Injury still lies at thy Door, and in God's account thou art as guilty as if no Restitution had been made. Not that thou art bound in this Case to make new Restitution over again; but thou art bound to bewail thy neglect, that thou didst not do it voluntarily and without the compulsion of the Law. Ser. 12.

2. Thou must do it in kind, if the thing be capable of it, and the injur'd Party demand it. Thou must restore the very thing which thou hadst deprived thy Neighbour of, if it be such a thing as can be restored, and be still in thy Power; unless he voluntarily accept of some other thing in exchange.

3. If thou canst not restore it in kind, thou art bound to restore it in value

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Vol. 8. value, in ſomething that is as good. As for ſpiritual Injuries done to the Souls of men, we are bound to make ſuch Reparation and Compenſation as we can. Thoſe whom we have drawn into Sin, and engaged in wicked Courſes, by our influence and example, or by neglect of our Duty towards them, we are ſo far, as becomes the Relation we ſtand in to them, to make acknowledgement of our fault, to endeavour by our Inſtruction and Counſel to reclaim them from thoſe Sins which we led them into, and *to recover them out of the ſnare of the Devil*; and ſhould never be at reſt till we have done as much or more for the furtherance of their Salvation, and helping them forwards towards Heaven, as we did contribute before to their Ruin and Deſtruction. If we have violated any ones Chaſtity, we are bound to Marry them, if it was done upon that Condition, and if they require it: thou art bound to keep and maintain thoſe Children which are the Fruit of thy Luſt, and to make Reparation to the Perſon whom thou haſt injured, by Dowry or otherwiſe.

If

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Ser. 12.

If thou hast defrauded and injured any Man in his good Name, thou art obliged to make him a Compensation, by acknowledgment of thy fault, by a studious vindication of him, and by doing him honour and repairing his Credit in all fitting ways. And if the Injury be irreparable (as it frequently happens, that we can hardly so effectually vindicate a Man, as we can defame him; and it is seldom seen that those wounds which are given to mens Reputation are perfectly healed) I say if the injury be irreparable, especially if it prove really prejudicial to a Man in his Calling and Civil Interest; if no other Satisfaction will be accepted, it is to be made in Mony, *which*, *Solomon* says, *answers all things*; and the rather, because the Reason and Equity of humane Laws hath thought fit to assign this way of Satisfaction in many Cases upon Actions of Scandal and Defamation. And whatever the Law would give in any Case, if it could be proved, that is the least we are bound in Conscience to do, when we are guilty to our

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selves, tho' the Law cannot take hold of us.

So likewise, if thou hast wounded a Man, thou art bound to pay the Cure, to repair to him and his Relations the Disability for his Calling and his way of Livelyhood and Subsistance, which he hath contracted by thy injury. And so for false Imprisonment, the real Detriment which comes to him by it, is to be made amends for: and so in all other Cases, the injured Person is, so far as is possible, to be restored to the good Condition in which he was before the Injury.

IV. As to the Measure and Proportion of the Restitution we are to make. *Zacheus* here offers *fourfold*, which was much beyond what any Law required in like Cases. The Measure of Restitution by the Judicial Law of the *Jews*, did very much vary according to the kind and degree of the injury. In some Cases a Man was only bound to simple Restitution; but then he was to do it to the full, *Exod.* 22. 5, 6. And so if that which is

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is another Man's be *delivered unto his Neighbour to keep, and be stolen from him, he is to make Restitution thereof,* Ver. 12. *And so if a Man borrow ought of his Neighbour, and it be hurt or die, the owner thereof not being with it, he shall surely make it good,* Ver. 14. *But for all manner of trespasses* by way of *theft, whether it be for Ox, for Ass, for Sheep, for Rayment, or for any manner of lost thing, which another challengeth to be his, He whom the Judge shall condemn, shall pay double to his Neighbour,* Ver. 9. that is, if it be of *a living Creature,* if the theft be *found in his Hands alive, whether it be Ox or Ass, or Sheep, he shall restore double,* Ver. 4. But if a Man did *steal an Ox or a Sheep, and did kill it or sell it,* he was to restore *five Oxen for an Ox, and four Sheep for a Sheep.* And thus we find *David* judged upon *Nathan*'s Parable of the Rich Man, who had taken the Poor Man's only Lamb, and kill'd and dreſt it for a Traveller that came to him, 2 *Sam.* 12. 6. *He shall restore the Lamb fourfold.* Now the Reason of this seems to be partly because of the advantage and usefulness of those Creatures above any o- Ser. 12.

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Vol. 8. other; and partly because when they were once kill'd or alienated, a Man could not without great trouble and difficulty make Discovery, which hazard of not discovering seems to be accounted for in the Restitution: but if a Man did voluntarily offer Restitution, before he was prosecuted, for any thing that was taken by violence, or unjustly detained from his Neighbour, then he was only *to restore the principal, and to add a fifth part thereto, and to offer up an Offering to the Lord*, and so *his atonement was made*, Levit. 6. 1. *&c.*

So that the highest proportion was *a fourth or fifth part*, and that only in the particular Case of *Sheep or Oxen stolen away, and kill'd or alienated afterwards.* Indeed *Solomon* speaks of a *sevenfold* Restitution, *Prov.* 6. 31. Where he saith, *If a thief be found, he shall restore sevenfold, even all the substance of his House*; where *seven* is only a number of Perfection, and the meaning is, he shall make perfect and full Restitution according to the Law, so far as his Substance or Estate will reach.

So

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So that it seems *Zacheus* in restoring *fourfold* did out-do the utmost severity of the Law; which in Case of fraud and oppression was but *double*, if demanded; if voluntarily offer'd, was the principal and *a fifth part* added: but to testifie the truth of his Repentance, and his hearty Sorrow for the injuries he had done, he punisheth himself beyond what the Law would have done. Ser. 12.

I do not say that this Example binds as to this measure and proportion: nay, I do not say we are bound to the proportions of the Law; for that only concerned the Nation of the *Jews*: but altho' we be free from the *Letter* of the Law, yet we are tyed to the *Equity* of it. As to the substance of the Duty of Restitution, we are bound to that by the Law of Nature. As to the Measure and Proportion, the Equity of the Judicial Law in its Proportions, and of *Zacheus* his Example, ought to be considerable to us.

But to speak more particularly concerning the Measures and Proportions

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of Restitution, I shall lay down these Propositions.

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1. Where Restitution can be made in Kind, or the Injury can be certainly valued, we are to restore the thing, or the value.

2. We are bound to restore the thing, with the natural increase of it, that is, to satisfie for the loss sustained in the mean time, and the gain hinder'd.

3. Where the thing cannot be restored, and the value of it is not certain, we are to give reasonable Satisfaction, that is, according to a middle estimation; not the highest, nor the lowest of things of the kind. The injur'd Person can demand no more, and strict Justice requires no more. But it is safe for him that hath done the injury, rather to exceed than to fall short.

4. We are at least to give by way of Restitution what the Law would give; for that is generally equal, and in most

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most Cases rather favourable than rigorous. Ser. 12.

5. A Man is not only bound to Restitution for the injury which he did, but for all that directy follows upon his injurious Act, tho' it were beyond his intention. For the first injury being wilful, thou art presumed to will all that which directly followed upon it; according to that rule, *Involuntarium ortum ex voluntario censetur pro voluntario. We are presumed to will that which follows upon a voluntary action, tho' we did not intend it.* For instance, if a Man maliciously and knowingly set fire upon another Man's House, tho' he intended only an injury to that particular Person, yet if a wind come and drive the fire to his Neighbours at some distance, tho' he did not intend this, yet because the first Act was unlawful, he is liable to satisfie for all the direct consequences of it. If a Man wound another without any intention of killing him, and the wound prove Mortal, tho' there was no probability that Death would ensue upon it, the Man is bound, because the first Act was injurious, to

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Vol. 8. make Reparation to his Relations for the damage they sustain by his Death; and if they did depend solely upon him, who died by such injury, thou art bound to maintain them.

6. Because those who have lived in a Trade and Course of Injustice, can hardly remember all the particular injuries they have done, so as to make exact Satisfaction for them, it will not be amiss over and besides to give something to the Poor. So *Zacheus* does here, *Half of my Estate I give to the Poor, and if I have taken any thing*, &c.

V. The Persons who are concern'd in Restitution. And here I shall consider,

First, The Persons who are bound to make Restitution.

Secondly, The Persons to whom it is to be made.

First, The Persons who are bound to make Restitution. In general, they who have done the injury, or they who

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who come into their ſtead, ſo as in Law or Equity the Injury devolves and deſcends upon them. But for the clearer ſtating of this, I ſhall lay down ſeveral Propoſitions, which may ſerve to reſolve a great many Caſes, that may be put concerning Perſons obliged to make Reſtitution. Ser. 12.

1. If the Injury be done ſolely by one, without Complices and Partakers in the Crime, he alone is reſponſible, and wholly bound to make Satisfaction; I mean, he only is bound ſo long as he lives, but if the injury deſcend as a burden upon the Eſtate, then he who enjoys the Eſtate becomes bound to make Satisfaction; as I ſhall ſhew afterwards.

2. If the Injury was done by more, who did all equally concur to the doing of it, they are all equally bound to make Satisfaction; and they are bound to concur together to that Purpoſe; and in Caſe of ſuch concurrence, every one is not bound to ſatisfie for the whole, but *pro ratâ parte*, for his ſhare; provided they do among them make full Satisfaction.

3. If

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3. If all will not concur, those that are willing are bound among them to make Reparation for the Injury: nay, if all the rest refuse to joyn with thee in it, thou art bound *in solidum* to make full Reparation so far as thou art able; because every one was guilty of the whole Injury. For instance, if four men conspire together to cheat a Man, or to rob him, any one of these, if the rest refuse, is bound to make entire Satisfaction; yea, tho' he was only partaker in the Benefit; because, as I said before, he is guilty of the whole Injury.

4. If the Injury be done by more, who do unequally concur to the doing of it, he that is Principal is chiefly and principally bound to make Satisfaction: and here I do not take *Principal*, strictly in the Sense of the Law, but in the Sense of Equity; not for him always who is the more immediate cause of the Injury, but for him who was the greatest cause, and by whose influence chiefly it was procured and done: but if the principal will

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will not, the Acceſſories and Inſtruments are bound, at leaſt for their ſhare, and according to the proportion of the Hand they had in it. But if the Principal do ſatisfie in the name, and upon the account of the reſt, then the Acceſſories are free from any Obligation to Reſtitution, and are only bound to Repentance. Ser. 12.

5. If the Injury devolve upon another, by deſcending as a burden upon the Eſtate, he who enjoys the Eſtate is bound to make Satisfaction. And when Injuries do thus deſcend as Burdens and Incumbrances upon Eſtates, and when not, the Civil Laws of the place where we live muſt determine: but then where my Caſe falls within the compaſs of the Law, I am bound voluntarily to ſatisfie without the Compulſion of the Law. For inſtance, If an Eſtate fall to me charged with a debt, which hath been unjuſtly detained, I am bound voluntarily to diſcharge the debt, ſo ſoon as it appears to me, before I am compell'd thereto by the Law.

6. As

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6. As for Personal Injuries which do not lie as Burdens upon the Estate, nor do by the Law descend upon the Son or Heir, tho' in strict Justice a Man be not bound to make Compensation for them, for that would be endless, *& infinitum in lege repudiatur, No Law can take notice of that which is infinite and endless*; for *quæ exitum non habent habentur pro impossibilibus, Those things which have no end, to which no bounds can be set, are esteemed among things impossible*, to which no Man can be obliged: but tho' in strict Justice the Heir be not bound to make Reparation, for the Personal injuries of him whom he succeeds in the Estate, yet in many Cases it is equitable, and generous, and christian, for such Persons to make some kind of Reparation for palpable and notorious Injuries. For instance, If I be Heir to an Estate, part of which I know certainly was injuriously gotten, it is not only Christian, but Prudent, to make Satisfaction in the Case to the party injur'd, if certainly known; if not, to give it to the Poor; for

for by this means I may take out the *Moth*, which was bred by injustice in the Estate, and rub off the *Rust*, that sticks to the Gold and Silver, which was got by oppression or fraud, and so free the remaining part of the Estate from that secret and Divine *Nemesis* which attends it and follows it. And for the same Reason, it is very Noble and Christian, for the Son and Heir of an unjust Father, to make some Reparation for his Father's injuries by Restitution, if the thing be capable of it: if not, by doing all good Offices to the injured Persons, which is some kind of Compensation. And in this Case the Obligation is greater, because by this means a Man does not only do what in him lies, to cut off *the curse*, which by his Father's oppression and injustice is *intail'd* upon the Family and Estate: but likewise, because a Son ought much more to be concern'd for his Father, than any other Person, and to consult the Honour and Reputation both of him and his own Family; and the Reparation which the Son makes, is in some sort the Father's Act, because he succeeds him and comes into his stead. Ser. 12.

Secondly, As

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Vol. 8. *Secondly*, As to the Persons to whom Satisfaction is is to be made. For the Resolution of those Cases which may fall under this Head, I shall lay down these Propositions.

1. If the injured Person be certainly known, and be alive and extant, the Satisfaction is to be made to him.

2. If he be not alive, or which is all one, not to be found or come at, Satisfaction is to be made to his nearest Relations, his Wife, or Children, or Brothers, or other nearest Kindred. The Reason is, because Satisfaction being due, and I having no right to keep that which I have injuriously gotten, if I cannot restore it to the Party himself, I ought in all Reason to place it there, where I may most reasonably presume the Party injur'd would have bestowed his Estate, and this part of it among the rest, had he been possessor of it. And by the same Reason that I am bound thus to restore the part of his Estate which I have injuriously taken or detained from him, I am likewise obliged to give Satisfaction to the same

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same Person for any other injury: for to whomsoever I would pay a debt due to one that is deceased, to the same Person I ought to give Satisfaction for other injuries, by which a debt is, tho' not formally, yet virtually contracted. Ser. 12.

3. If the Party injured be not certainly known, or have no near Relations known to me, in that Case I think it very adviseable to give so much to the Poor, or to some Charitable use: or if the Party injured be not capable of proper Satisfaction, as sometimes it is a Community and Body of men that we have injured, in this Case it is proper to repair the injuries to Communities or Bodies of men, by equivalent good Offices, or by some publick good Work, which may be of common Benefit and Advantage. This is the *Fifth* thing I proposed to speak to, the Persons concern'd in Restitution; both the Persons who are bound to make Restitution, and the Persons to whom it is to be made. Of the rest hereafter.

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SERMON XIII.

The Nature and Neceſſity of Reſtitution.

The Second Sermon on this Text.

LUKE XIX. 8, 9.

And if I have taken any thing from any Man by falſe accuſation, I reſtore him fourfold. And Jeſus ſaid unto him, This day is Salvation come to this Houſe.

IN ſpeaking to theſe words, I propoſed to conſider,

Firſt, The Nature of this Duty of Reſtitution.

Secondly, To ſhew the Neceſſity of it.

Thirdly, To perſwade men to the diſcharge of it.

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Vol. 8. In treating of the Nature of Reſtitution, I have conſider'd,

I. The Act.

II. The Extent of it.

III. The Manner how it is to be perform'd.

IV. The Meaſure of it.

V. The Perſons who are to make Reſtitution; and the Perſons to whom Reſtitution is to be made. I now proceed to conſider,

VI. The time when Reſtitution is to be made. In theſe Caſes a Man is not tyed up to an inſtant, not juſt to the preſent time, unleſs the Caſe be ſuch, that he can never do it, if he do not do it then. As if a Man lie upon his Death-Bed, that is a Caſe that admits of no delay, a Man ſhould haſten Reſtitution, as he would do the making of his Will, and the diſpoſal of his Eſtate; leſt if he do not do it preſently, he loſe his opportunity of doing it for ever: but ordinarily, a Man is not ſo ſtrictly tyed up to moments, and to the preſent time. It is ſufficient that a Man be for the preſent reſolved to do it, ſo ſoon as morally he can, ſo ſoon as he would do other Actions of great moment and concernment.

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ment. And to this purpose the Text gives us an excellent Pattern; *Zacheus*, the same day he repented, took up this Resolution, and to oblige himself effectually to put it in Execution, he publickly declares it, and before all the People offers to make Restitution to all whom he had injur'd. Sect. 13.

Therefore take heed of all unnecessary delays in these matters: for tho' God would accept of a firm and sincere Resolution in this Case, if a Person thus resolved should, before he could bring his Resolution to effect, happen to be cut off by Death, or be otherwise render'd incapable of doing it, I say, tho' God would accept such a Resolution as this; yet he will not interpret that to be a sincere Resolution, which a Man is negligent to put in Practice: for every neglect of putting our Resolution in Practice, is a degree of quitting and altering it; and he who did not do what he was resolved to do, when he had an opportunity and ability of doing it, is justly presumed to have let fall his Resolution.

Therefore let no Man presume upon his good Intention and Resolution

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Vol. 8. in this kind; for they are only acceptable to God, so far as they are sincere and real; and they are only so far sincere and real, as the Man that makes them, is ready to put them in Execution, so soon as morally he can. And if thou carelesly and supinely trifle away thy opportunities in this kind, God may likewise deprive thee of an opportunity for ever. For all the while thou wilfully neglectest to make Restitution, thou art guilty of the injury; and there are hardly two Sins that cry louder to God for a quick and speedy revenge, than Injustice and Oppression, Deceit and Fraud. God many times takes such Causes into his more immediate cognizance, 2 *Thess.* 4. 4. *Let no Man deceive or go beyond his Brother in any thing: for God is the revenger of such.* And *David* tells us, that *God* in a peculiar manner *abhors the Blood-thirsty and deceitful Man*; and threatens that *he shall not live out half his days.* And God by the Prophet, *Mal.* 3. 5. tells us, that *He will be a swift witness against the oppressors.* And if God be so swift to take vengeance upon such Persons, surely then they are concerned to be very quick

quick and speedy in making Satisfaction for their injuries and oppressions, Ser. 13. lest Divine Vengeance prevent them, and instead of making Reparation to men, they be call'd upon to make Satisfaction to the Justice of God; and you know who hath said it, that *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

You therefore that have hitherto neglected this Duty, delay it no longer; by all means discharge your Consciences of this Burden, before you come to lie upon a Death-Bed. Then the Consciences of the worst of men begin to work, like a Stomach oppress and surcharged with meat; and then they are willing for their ease to vomit up those Estates, which they have devoured by fraud and injustice; then they begin to consider the difficulty of being saved, and to fear that it will be impossible for them ever *to enter in at the strait Gate*, thus laden with the spoils of violence and deceit; even those that have the hardest and most seared Consciences, will be touched with the Sense of such great Sins at such a time: but do not thou

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Vol. 8. defer this work to that time, for these *two* Reasons.

1. Because it cannot be so acceptable to God, to make Restitution at such a time, as when thou art in health and in hopes of longer life. To give a Man his own, when thou canst enjoy it and use it no longer, this is next to detaining of it.

2. Because in all probability the Restitution which is then made will not prove so effectual. What thou dost thy self, that thou art sure is done: but what thou leavest to be done by thy Executors, and chargest upon them, thou art not sure will be done; ten to one but if they can find out any trick and evasion in Law, either to delay or avoid the doing of it, it shall either never be done, or very slowly. This is the *sixth* thing, the time when Restitution is to be made.

But before I leave this Head, there is one Case very proper to be considered, which relates to this Circumstance of Time, and that is concerning injuries of a very ancient date; that is, how far this Duty of Restitution is to look backward, and whether it doth not expire by tract of time? For answer

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ſwer to this, I ſhall lay down theſe Propoſitions. Ser. 13.

1. At what diſtance of time ſoever the Law would in the Caſe make Reparation and give Satisfaction, we are undoubtedly bound in Conſcience voluntarily to give it. I deliver this generally; becauſe, tho' it be poſſible ſome Civil Laws may be in ſome Caſes unreaſonable in this matter, yet they are our beſt Rule and Guide; and, ſpeaking generally and for the moſt part, they are as equitable as the Reaſon of Man could deviſe. Not that we are to tie our ſelves ſtrictly to the Law, ſo as not to go farther, if Reaſon and Equity require; for, as *Seneca* ſays, *Parum eſt ad legem bonum eſſe, It is no great argument of goodneſs, to be juſt as good as the Law requires.* Therefore I think it will very well become a good Man, in many Caſes, rather to be better than the Law, than to keep ſtrictly to it.

2. In Caſes where the Law hath not determined the time, we may do well to obſerve a proportion to what the Law hath determined in other Caſes, which come neareſt our own Caſe.

3. When the injury is ſo old, that the right which the injured Perſon

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Vol. 8. had to Reparation is reasonably presumed to be quitted and forsaken, then the Obligation to Satisfaction ceaseth and expires. The Reason is plain, because every Man may recede from his own Right, and give it up to another; and where a Man may reasonably be presumed to have parted with his right to another, the Obligation to Restitution ceaseth, and the right of claiming it. Now *when* a thing begins, *haberi pro derelicto*, that is, *when* a right may reasonably be presumed to be quitted and forsaken, cannot in general be determined: but this must be estimated according to the importance of the right and thing in Controversie, as whether it be more or less considerable; and according to the Reason and Determination of Laws about things of this Nature. To illustrate this Rule by instances. The *Saxons*, *Danes*, and *Normans*, did at several times invade and conquer this Nation, and conquer'd it we will suppose unjustly, and consequently did hold and possess that which truly belonged to others, contrary to right; and several of the Posterity of each of these do probably to this day hold what was then

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then injuriously gotten; I say, in this Case, the Obligation to Satisfaction and Restitution is long since expired, and the Original Title, which those who were dispossest had, is reasonably presumed to be long since quitted and forsaken; and that for very wise Reasons in Law and Government; because it would confound and unsettle all Estates, if every thing, the Original Title whereof is naught, were to be restored; and it is but equal to presume, that all Mankind are so reasonable, as to quit their right in such Cases, rather than to cause endless disturbances, and to have the guilt of Injustice everlastingly perpetuated. And tho' it be a rule in Civil Law, that *Vitiosum initio, tractu temporis non convalescit, A Title originally bad can never by time be made just*; it is only true thus far, that time in it self doth not alter the Nature of things: but considering the necessities of the World, and the infinite difficulties of retrieving an ancient Right, and the inconveniences and disturbances that would thereby redound to Humane Society, it is better that an injury should be perpetuated, than that a great inconvenience Ser. 13.

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ſhould come by endeavouring to redreſs it; ſo that altho' conſidering a thing ſimply in it ſelf, an injury is ſo far from being leſſened or null'd by tract of time, that it is increaſed, and the longer it continues, the greater it is; yet by accident, and in compliance with the neceſſity of things, length of time may give a right to that which was at firſt injuriouſly poſſeſt. *Judg.* 11. 26. Thus *Jephthah* reaſons with the King of *Ammon*, who had made War for recovery of an ancient Right, as he ſuppos'd. And tho' the inſtances I have given of the unjuſt Conqueſt of a Nation be great and publick; yet the ſame is to be determined proportionably in leſs and particular Caſes. And thus I have done with the *ſixth* thing.

VII. And *laſtly*, As to the order of Reſtitution. When we have injur'd a great many, and are not able to make Reſtitution to all at once, our beſt Prudence and Diſcretion muſt govern us herein. Becauſe no certain Rule can be given, which will reach all Caſes, I will only ſay this in general, that it is reaſonable firſt to make Reparation for the oldeſt and greateſt injuries; and

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and *ceteris paribus*, if all other Considerations be equal, to consider those first, who are most necessitous, and if there be any other special Reason and Obligation arising from the Nature of the injury, or the Circumstances of the Person injur'd, to have regard to them. I come now in the Ser. 13.

Second place, To confirm the truth of the Proposition, That to make Restitution and Satisfaction to those whom we have injured, is a proper and necessary Fruit of a true Repentance. And this will appear, if we consider these *two* things.

I. Our Obligation to this Duty.

II. The Nature of Repentance.

I. Our Obligation to this Duty. Upon the same account that we are obliged to Repentance, we are obliged to Restitution; and both these Obligations arise from natural Equity and Justice. All Sin is an injury done; and tho' Repentance be not strictly Satisfaction, yet it is the best we can make; and he is unjust, who having done an injury, does not make the best Reparation he can. But now there are some Sins, in which, besides the injury that is done to God by them,

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Vol. 8. them, upon the general account, as they are Sins and Violations of his Laws, there is likewise a particular injury done to men; and such are all those, the effect whereof redounds to the prejudice of other men: such are fraud and oppression, and all other Sins whereby others are injured. So that in these kinds of Sins, there are two things considerable, the irregularity and viciousness of the Act, and the evil Effects of it upon other men: the former respects the Law, and calls for Sorrow and Repentance for our Violation of it; the latter respects the Person that is injured, and calls for Satisfaction and Restitution. So that our Obligation to Restitution is founded in the immutable and indispensable Law of Nature, which is *To do that to another, which we would have another do to us.* We would have no Man be injurious to us, or if he have been so, we would have him make Satisfaction and Reparation to us of the injury he hath done; and we take it grievously from him, if he do not. Now nothing is more just and equitable, than that we should do that to others, which we in the like Case would

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would expect from them: for the very same obligation that lies upon others towards us, does lie upon us in regard to others. Ser. 13.

II. This will yet further appear, if we consider the Nature of Repentance, which is to be sorry for what we have done, and not to do the like for the future. Now if thou be sorry for what thou hast done, thou wishest with all thy heart thou hadst not done it; and if thou dost so, thou wilt undo, as much as in thee lieth, what thou hast done. Now the best way to undo an injury, is to make Reparation for it; and till we do this, we continue in the Sin. For if it was a Sin, to do the injury at first, it is the same continued, not to make Satisfaction; and we do not cease to commit the Sin, so long as we detain that, which is another's Right. Nothing but Restitution can stop the progress of Sin: for if it be a Sin to take that which is another Man's from him by fraud or violence, it is the same continued and virtually repeated, to detain and keep it from him; and nothing more contrary to Repentance, than to continue in the Sin thou pretendest to repent of.

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Vol. 8. of. For how art thou sorry for doing of it, if thou continuest to do it; if thou wilt go on to do it and do it again? How dost thou hate thy Sin, if thou enjoy the Benefit and reap the Advantage of it? If thou dost this, it is an Argument thou lovest the Sin still: for thou didst never love it for *it* self, but for the Profit of it, and so long as thou retainest that, thou canst not be quit of the Sin. Thou holdest fast thy Sin, so long as thou refusest to make Satisfaction for it; and Repentance without Restitution differs as much from true Repentance, as continuance in Sin does from the forsaking of it. *Si res aliena non redditur, non agitur pœnitentia, sed fingitur*; so St. *Augustine*; *If we do not restore that, which we have injuriously detained from another, our Repentance is not real, but feigned and hypocritical*, and will not be effectual to the obtaining of our Pardon. 'Tis a very common, but a true and terrible saying, *Non dimittitur peccatum, nisi restituatur ablatum, No Remission without Restitution.* If we will inherit the Profit and Advantage of Sin, we cannot think it unreasonable

or

or unjuſt that we ſhould inherit the Puniſhment of it. Ser. 13.

When the Scripture ſpeaks of Repentance, it frequently mentions Reſtitution as a proper Fruit and Effect of it, and as a neceſſary and indiſpenſable Condition of Pardon and Life. *Ezek.* 33. 14, 15, 16. *Again, when I ſay unto the wicked, Thou ſhalt ſurely die: if he turn from his ſin, and do that which is lawful and right; if the wicked reſtore the pledge, give again that he had robbed,* &c. As if he had ſaid, when I denounce Death and Deſtruction to the wicked, there is but this one way to eſcape it, and that is by Repentance; but then take notice, what a Repentance it is, that will avail to this end; it is not a bewailing our ſelves, and lamenting over our Sins, but a forſaking of them and returning to our Duty; *If we turn from our ſin, and do that which is lawful and right.* For inſtance, if he have been guilty of Injuſtice and Oppreſſion; if he leave his Courſe, and deal juſtly and righteouſly with his Neighbour, and not only ſo, but he alſo make Reſtitution for the injury he hath done, and reſtore what he hath unjuſtly detained

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Vol. 8. tain and taken away; *If he reſtore the pledge, and give again that he hath robbed*, and do no Injuſtice for the future, but *walk in the Statutes of Life, without committing iniquity*, upon theſe Terms and no other *he ſhall live, he ſhall not die*. Yea the very light of Nature could ſuggeſt thus much to the People of *Nineveh*, that there was no hope, without this Fruit of Repentance, of appeaſing God's wrath. Therefore the King and the Princes, after all the external ſolemnity of *faſting*, and *ſackcloth*, and *crying mightily*, they decree that *Every one ſhould turn from the evil of his ways, and from the violence that was in their Hands, ut rapinâ manus vacuefaciat, & rapta reſtituat, ſine quo non eſt vera pœnitentia*; ſo *Grot.* upon the place, *That he empty his hands of the ſpoils of rapine and oppreſſion*, that is, *that he make Reſtitution, without which there can be no Repentance*: And upon their doing this, 'tis ſaid, that *God ſpared them*, Ver. 10. *And God ſaw their works, that they turned from their evil ways*. 'Tis not ſaid, that he ſaw their faſting and ſackcloth, but *He ſaw their works*, the real Fruits and Effects of their Repentance; and upon this

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this it was that *God repented of the evil he said he would do to them, and he did it not.* And elsewhere we find, that God speaks with great Indignation of the most solemn Repentance, which is not accompanied with this Fruit, *Isa.* 58. 3, 4, 5, 6. The People tell God how *they had fasted and afflicted their Soul, and made their voice to be heard on high*: but God despiseth all this, because it was not accompanied with this Fruit of Repentance, *Is it such a fast as I have chosen?* &c. There is so much of natural Justice and Equity in Restitution, and it is so proper a Fruit of Repentance, that as *Grotius* observes, it is not only the Doctrine of the *Jews* and Christians, but of Heathens and *Mahumetans*, that the Repentance which doth not produce this Fruit is feigned, and will never avail with God for Pardon and Mercy. Thus much for Confirmation of this Doctrine. Ser. 13.

The *third* and *last* thing I propos'd was to perswade to the Practice of this Duty; and this may serve by way of Application of the Doctrine of Restitution. The use we should make of it is.

First, To perswade men to the Practice of this difficult Duty. I doubt

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Vol. 8. not but the Arguments I have uſed are ſufficient to convince us of the Equity and Neceſſity of Reſtitution; but what Arguments ſhall I uſe to perſwade to the Practice and Exerciſe of it? When we preſs men to their Duty, tho' we have ſome Advantages on our ſide, yet we have alſo great diſadvantages. We have this Advantage, that we have the Reaſon and Conſciences of men on our ſide: but then we have this diſadvantage that we have to contend either with the Luſts or Intereſts of men, or both: now that theſe are *uſually* more powerful, is evident, in that the Luſts and Intereſts of men do ſo frequently byaſs and draw them to do things contrary to Reaſon and Conſcience. When we perſwade men to be juſt, and to make Reſtitution to thoſe whom they have injur'd, 'tis true we have not to contend with the Luſts of men, with any corrupt and vicious Inclination of Nature. There are ſome Sins that have their riſe from mens natural Tempers, as Paſſion and Luſt, and thoſe ſenſual vices that abound in the World: but there's nothing in any Man's natural Temper and Diſpoſition that inclines him to be unjuſt, no Man's Complexion doth particularly

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ly diſpoſe him to lie or ſteal, to defraud his Neighbour, or detain his Right from him; it is only the Intereſts of men that prompt them to theſe Sins; and they are upon this account the more inexcuſable, becauſe no Man is inclined to theſe Sins from particular Temper and Conſtitution; ſo that an unjuſt Man is in ordinary Caſes and circumſtances a greater Sinner, than a Drunkard or a Luſtful Man, becauſe no Man can pretend to be hurried away by the ſtrong Propenſion and Inclination of his Nature, to cheat his Brother: but altho' when we perſwade men to be juſt, we have not the Luſts of Men to contend withal, yet we have another powerful Adverſary, and that is the Intereſts of men, which is one of the Chief *Rulers and Governours of this World*; ſo that when we preſs men to Reſtitution, we touch them in their Intereſt, which is a very touchy and tender thing; when we tell them that without Reſtitution no Man can repent and be ſaved, they think this to be *a very hard ſaying*, and they know not *how to bear it*. Ser. 13.

But certainly it hath all the Reaſon and Equity in the World on its ſide. If it be ſo hard for them to reſtore that

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Vol. 8. which is another Man's, is it not much harder for him whom thou haſt injured, to loſe that which is his own? Make it thine own Caſe; wouldſt thou not think it much harder to have thy right detained from thee by another, than for another to part with that which is not his own?

But I am ſenſible how little it is, that Reaſon will ſway with men againſt their Intereſt; therefore the beſt Argument that I can uſe will be to ſatisfie men, that upon a true and juſt account, it is not ſo much their Intereſt, to retain what they have unjuſtly got, as to make Reſtitution. And this I ſhall do by ſhewing men, that to make Reſtitution is their true Intereſt both in reſpect of themſelves, and of their Poſterity.

I. In reſpect of themſelves. It is better both in reſpect of our preſent Condition in this World, and of our future State.

1. In reſpect of our preſent Condition in this World, and that both in reſpect of our outward Eſtate, and our inward Peace and Tranquility.

(1.) In reſpect of our outward Eſtate. If we have any belief of the Providence of God, that his Bleſſing can

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prosper an Estate, and his Curse consume it and make it moulder away, Ser. 13. we cannot but judge it highly our Interest, to clear our Estates of Injustice by Restitution; and by this means to free them from God's Curse. For if any of our Estate be unjustly gotten, it is enough to draw down God's Curse upon all that we have; it is like a moth in our Estate, which will insensibly consume it; it is like a secret Poyson, which will diffuse it self through the whole; like a little Land *in Capite*, which brings the whole Estate into *Wardship*.

Hear how God threatens to blast Estates unjustly gotten, *Job* 20. 12, *&c.* concluding with these words, *This is the portion of a wicked Man*, that is, of an unjust Man, *Jer.* 17. 11. *As a Partridge sitteth on Eggs, and hatcheth them not, so he that getteth Riches and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a foo'.* Men many times live to see the folly of their Injustice and Oppression, and their Estates wither away before their Eyes, and by the just revenge of God, they are deprived of them in the midst of their days. So that the best way to fix an Estate, and to secure it to our

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ſelves, is by Reſtitution to free it from God's Curſe; and when we have done that, how much ſoever we may diminiſh our Eſtate by it, we may look upon our ſelves as having a better Eſtate than we had; better, becauſe we have God's Bleſſing with that which remains. If we believe the Bible, we cannot doubt of this. The Spirit of God tells us this from the Obſervation of the wiſeſt men, *Pſal.* 37. 16. *A little that a righteous Man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked.* Prov. 16. 8. *Better is a little with righteouſneſs, than great Revenues without Right.*

(2.) In reſpect of inward Peace and Tranquillity, it is highly our Intereſt to make Reſtitution. No man can enjoy an Eſtate, that does not enjoy himſelf; and nothing puts a Man more out of the Poſſeſſion of himſelf, than an unquiet Conſcience; and there are no kind of Sins lie heavier upon a Man's Conſcience, than thoſe of Injuſtice; becauſe they are committed againſt the cleareſt natural Light, and there's the leaſt natural Temptation to them. They have theſe two great Aggravations, that they are Sins moſt againſt knowledge, and have moſt of Will in them. There needs no Revelation to con-

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convince men of Sins of Injuſtice and Oppreſſion; every Man hath thoſe Principles born with him, which will ſufficiently acquaint him, that he ought not to be Injurious to another. There's nothing that relates to our Duty, that a Man can know with greater certainty than this, that Injuſtice is a Sin. And as it is a Sin moſt againſt knowledge, ſo it hath moſt of Will in it. Men are hurried away to other Sins by the ſtrong and violent Propenſions of their Nature: but no Man is inclined by his Temper and Conſtitution, to Fraud and Oppreſſion; and the leſs there is of Nature in any Sin, there's the leſs of Neceſſity, and conſequently it is the more voluntary. Now the greater the Aggravations of any Sin are, the greater is the guilt; and the greater the guilt is, the more unquiet our Conſciences will be: ſo that if thou have any regard to the Intereſt of thine own Peace, if that be conſiderable to thee, which to wiſe men is the moſt valuable thing in the World, do not for a little wealth continue in thoſe Sins, which will create perpetual diſturbance to thee, and imbitter all the Pleaſures of thy Life. Hear how *Job* deſcribes the Condition of the wicked oppreſſors in Ser. 13.

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the place before cited, *Job.* 20. 12, &c.
Vol. 8. *He ſhall not rejoyce in them, becauſe he hath oppreſſed, becauſe he hath violently taken away a Houſe which he builded not, ſurely he ſhall not feel quietneſs in his belly*, that is, he ſhall have no inward Peace and Contentment in the midſt of all his outward Enjoyments; but his ill-gotten Eſtate will work in his Conſcience, and gripe him, as if a Man had taken down Poyſon into his Belly.

2. But chiefly, In reſpect of our future Eſtate in another World, it is every Man's Intereſt to make Reſtitution. Without Repentance we are ruined for ever, and without Reſtitution no Repentance. *No unrighteous Man hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of Chriſt.* If thou continue in thy fraud and oppreſſion, and carry theſe Sins with thee into another World, they will hang as a Millſtone about thy Neck, and ſink thee into eternal Ruine. He that wrongeth his Brother hateth him, and *he that hateth his Brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal Life abiding in him*, 1 John 3. 15. Rom. 1. 18. *The wrath of God is revealed from Heaven, againſt all ungoldlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men.* So that if it be mens Intereſt to eſcape the wrath

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wrath of God, it concerns us to make Reparation for those Injuries which will expose us to it. That is a dreadful Text, *James* 5. 1, 2, 3, 4. *Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments moth-eaten: Your Gold and Silver is canker'd, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire: ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold! the Hire of the labourers which have reaped down your Fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped, are enter'd into the ears of the Lord of Sabbaoth.* Do not by *detaining the treasures of wickedness, treasure up to your selves wrath against the day of wrath:* do not make your selves *Miserable for ever*, that you may be *Rich for a little while:* do not for a little *Silver and Gold*, forfeit *the eternal inheritance*, which was *not purchased with corruptible things, but with the precious Blood of the Son of God:* And if this Consideration, which is the weightiest in the World, will not prevail with men, I can only say with the Angel, *Rev.* 22. 11. *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still*, let him continue Sect. 13.

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tinue in his Injustice at his Peril, and remember what is added at the 12th *verse, Behold! I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every Man according as his work shall be.*

II. In respect of our Children and Posterity, it is greatly our interest to make Restitution. God many times suffers an Estate got by oppression to prosper for a little while: but there is a curse attends it, which descends upon the Estate like an incumbrance; and Parents many times, when they think they entail an Estate, they entail Poverty upon their Children. *Job* 20. 10. speaking of the Children of the Oppressor, he saith, *His Children shall seek to please the Poor, and his hands shall restore their Goods.* And *Job* 21. 19. *God layeth up his iniquity for his Children.* Thou layest up Riches for thy Children; and *God lays up thine iniquity* and Injustice *for them*, the Curse that belongs to them. *Hab.* 2. 9, 10, 11. *Wo to him that coveteth an evil covetousness, or gaineth an evil gain to his House,* &c. Thou thoughtest to raise thy Family by those ways; but *thou hast consulted shame to thy House.* No such effectual way to Ruine thy Family, as Injustice and Oppression. As then you would not transmit

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a Curse to your Children, and devolve Misery upon your Family, free your Estates from the burden and weight of what is other mens, lest by God's just Judgment and secret Providence, that little which you injuriously detain from others, carry away your whole Estate to them and their Family. God's Providence many times makes abundant Restitution, when we will not. Ser. 13.

Having now endeavoured to satisfie men, that it is their truest Interest, to make Restitution for the injuries they have done to others, it remains only that I should answer an Objection or two, which men are apt to make against this Duty.

First, Men say they are ashamed to do it. *Ans.* It is not matter of shame, but of Praise and Commendation. But it may be thou wilt say, It is matter of shame to have injured another, and this is the way to lay open thy shame. Indeed if the injury were publick, the Restitution ought to be so too, as the only way to take off the shame of the injury. For thy Restitution doth not in this Case publish thy shame, but thy honesty: but if the injury was private, thou may'st preserve thy own Credit, by concealing thy self, and pro-

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Vol. 8. provided thou do the thing effectually, thou may'ſt be as prudent, as to the manner of doing it, as thou pleaſeſt.

Secondly, Another Objection is the prejudice it will be to mens Eſtates. But this I have anſwer'd already, by ſhewing that it is more their Intereſt to make Reſtitution, than to continue in the Sin. I ſhall only add, that, as our Saviour reaſons in another Caſe, *It is profitable for thee, that one of thy members ſhould periſh, rather than that thy whole Body ſhould be caſt into Hell:* 'tis true likewiſe here, it is profitable for thee, that thou ſhouldſt go a Beggar to Heaven, rather than that thou ſhouldſt go to Hell, laden with the ſpoils and Guilt of Rapine and Injuſtice.

Thirdly, The laſt Objection that I ſhall mention, is diſſability to make Reſtitution. This indeed is ſomething; where nothing is to be had, every Man muſt loſe his Right: but then remember, that there muſt be a hearty Repentance for the Sin; and thy Sorrow muſt be ſo much greater, by how much thy ability to make Reſtitution is leſs; and there muſt be a willing Mind, a firm Purpoſe and Reſolution of doing it, when God ſhall enable thee, and diligent endeavours to that purpoſe. Un-

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der the Law those who were not able to make Restitution, were sold for six years, if their service did not make Reparation in less time. 'Tis true indeed, the moderation of the Gospel doth not suffer Christians to deal so hardly with one another: but if the Gospel remit of this rigor, and do not allow Christians to challange it, we should voluntarily do in effect that which they were forced to, that is, we should use our best endeavours and diligence to put our selves into a Condition of making Satisfaction; and we should not look upon any thing beyond the necessary conveniences of Life, as our own, till we have done it; unless the Party injured will recede from his Right, in whole or in part. For tho' the impossibility of the thing do discharge us for the present, yet the Obligation still lies upon us to do it, so soon as we are able. Ser. 13.

And here it will be proper to consider the Case of those, who have compounded with their Creditors for a small part, whether they be in Conscience and Equity released from the whole debt. I am loth to lay unnecessary Burdens upon mens Consciences, therefore I am very tender in resolving such Cases: but I ought to have a more tender care of the Souls of men, than of their Estates: therefore to deal

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deal plainly, and to discharge my Conscience in this matter, I think such Persons do, notwithstanding the Composition, stand obliged in Equity and Conscience for the whole debt, and are bound to discharge it, so soon as they can with tolerable Convenience. My Reason is, because, tho' they be discharged in Law, yet the Law does not intend to take off the Obligation of Conscience or Equity, which they are under; but leaves that as it found it. Thus the Case stands; men who are in a way of Trade are engaged by the necessities of their calling, to venture a great part of their Estate in other mens Hands, and by this means become liable many times to be undone without their own fault; therefore it is usual, when any Man in a way of Trade becomes disabled, for the Creditors to make such a Composition with him, as his Estate will bear, and upon this Composition to give him a full discharge, so as that they cannot afterwards by Law require of him the remainder of their debt. Now tho' this be a favour to the debtor, yet it is principally intended for the benefit of the Creditor; because it being his Act, it is to be presumed, that he intended it as much as may be, for his own Advantage; and so it is, for the Creditor hath as much Satisfaction at present

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ſent as can be had, and the debtor is hereby left in a capacity of recovering himſelf again by his induſtry and diligence, which could not be, if he were not fully diſcharged; for if he were ſtill liable for the reſt, he would continually be obnoxious to Impriſonnent, which would render him incapable of following his calling; or if he were at liberty, he could have no Credit to enable him to do any thing in his calling; for who would truſt a Man with any thing, who is liable every moment to have it taken from him? So that the Reaſon of this plenary diſcharge is this, that men, who are otherwiſe hopeful, and in a fair probability of recovering themſelves, may not be render'd incapable of getting an Eſtate afterwards, whereby they may ſupport themſelves, and diſcharge their debts. Now this diſcharge being given in order to theſe ends, it cannot be imagined that it ſhould be intended to defeat them; but it is in all Reaſon to be ſuppoſed, that the Creditors did not intend to take off the Obligation of Equity and Conſcience, only to put the Man into a Condition of doing ſomthing towards the enabling him to diſcharge his debt. So that unleſs it were expreſt at the Compoſition, that the Creditor would never expect more from him, Ser. 13.

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him, upon account of Equity and Conscience, but did freely forgive him the rest, the contrary whereof is usually done, I say, unless it were thus expresst, there's no Reason, why the Creditor's favour in making a Composition should be abused to his prejudice, and why a legal discharge, given him on purpose for this Reason among others, to put him into a capacity of recovering himself and giving full Satisfaction, should be so interpreted, as to extinguish the equitable right of the Creditor to the remainder of his debt.

The *Second* Use of this Doctrine of Restitution should be by way of prevention, that men would take heed of being injurious, and so take away the occasion of Restitution, and free themselves from the Temptation of not performing so difficult and so unwelcome a Duty. It is much easier of the two, not to cozen or oppress thy Neighbour, than after thou hast done it, it will be to bring thy self to make Restitution: therefore we should be very careful, not to be injurious to any one in any kind; neither immediately by our selves, nor by aiding and assisting others, by our Power and Interest, or skill in the Law, or by any other way, to do injustice.

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SERMON XIV.

The Usefulness of Consideration, in order to Repentance.

DEUT. XXXII. 29.

O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!

THIS Chapter is call'd *Moses* his Song, in which he briefly recounts the various Providences of God toward the People of *Israel*, and the froward Carriage of that People towards him.

First, He puts them in mind how God had chosen them for his peculiar People, and had by a signal Care and Providence conducted them all that tedious Journey, for the space of fourty

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Vol. 8. years in the Wilderness, till he had brought them to the promised Land, which they had now begun to take Possession of.

And then he foretels, how they would behave themselves after all this mercy and kindness God had shewn to them, *ver.* 15. *Jesurun waxed fat, and kicked, and forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his Salvation.* Upon this he tells them, God would be extremely displeased with them, and would multiply his Judgments upon them, *ver.* 19, 20. *When the Lord saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his Sons and of his Daughters; And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no Faith.* And ver. 23. *I will heap mischief upon them, I will spend mine arrows upon them.* And then enumerates the particular Judgments which he would send upon them: nay, he declares he would have utterly consumed them, but that he was loth to give occasion of so much Triumph to his and their Enemies, *ver.* 26, 27. *I said, I would scatter them into corners, I would make the re-*

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remembrance of them to ceaſe from among men; were it not, that I feared the wrath of the enemy, leſt their adverſary ſhould behave themſelves ſtrangely, and leſt they ſhould ſay our hand is high, and the Lord hath not done all this. And he adds the Reaſon of all this ſeverity; becauſe they were ſo very ſtupid and inconſiderate, *ver.* 28. *For they are a Nation void of Counſel, neither is there any Underſtanding in them.* Ser. 14.

And in the concluſion of all, he repreſents God as it were breaking out into this vehement and affectionate Wiſh, *O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this, that they would conſider their latter end!*

O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this. What is that? *This* may refer to all that went before, O that they were wiſe to conſider what God had done for them, and what they had done againſt him, and what he will do againſt them, if they continue or renew their former Provocations! O that they were but duly apprehenſive of *this*, and would lay it ſeriouſly to heart!

But from what follows, it ſeems more particularly to refer to thoſe par-

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ticular Judgments, which God had threatned them withal, and which would certainly befal them, if they still continued in their disobedience. *O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!* That is, the sad consequences of these their Provocations, that by the Consideration thereof, they might prevent all those Evils and Calamities, by turning from those Sins which would unavoidably bring them upon them.

From the words thus explained, I shall observe these *four* things.

I. That God doth really and heartily desire the Happiness of men, and to prevent their Misery and Ruin. For the very design of these words is to express this to us, and it is done in a very vehement, and, as I may say, passionate manner.

II. That it is a great point of wisdom to consider seriously the last Issue and Consequence of our Actions, whither they tend, and what will follow upon them. And therefore wisdom is here described by *the Consideration of our latter end.*

III. That this is an excellent means to

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to prevent that Miſery, which will otherwiſe befall us. And this is neceſſarily implyed in this wiſh, that if they would but conſider theſe things, they might be prevented. Ser. 14.

IV. That the want of this Conſideration is the great cauſe of mens Ruin. And this is likewiſe implyed in the words, that one great reaſon of mens Ruin is, becauſe they are not ſo wiſe, as to conſider the fatal Iſſue and Conſequence of a ſinful Courſe. I ſhall ſpeak briefly to each of theſe.

I. That God doth really and heartily deſire the Happineſs of men, and to prevent their Miſery and Ruin. To expreſs this to us, God doth put on the vehemency of a Humane Paſſion, *O that they were wiſe*, &c. The Laws of God are a clear evidence of this; becauſe the obſervance of them tends to our Happineſs. There is no good Prince makes Laws with any other deſign, than to promote the publick Welfare and Happineſs of his People: and with much more Reaſon may we imagine, that the infinite good God does by all his Laws deſign the Happineſs of his Creatures. And the Exhortations of Scripture, by which he enforceth his

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Vol. 8. Laws, are yet a greater evidence how earnestly he desires the Happiness of his Creatures. For it shews that he is concerned for us, when he useth so many Arguments to perswade us to our Duty, and when he expostulates so vehemently with us for our neglect of it, saying to Sinners, *Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die, O House of* Israel? *Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life*, says our Blessed Saviour, with great trouble to see men so obstinately set against their own Happiness; and again, *How often would I have gathered you, as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings, and ye would not.* And to satisfie us yet farther, that it is his real desire, by our obedience to his Laws, to prevent our Ruine, God does frequently in Scripture put on the Passions of men, and use all sorts of vehement expressions to this purpose, *Deut.* 5. 29. *O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my Commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their Children for ever!* And *Psal.* 81. 13. *O that my People had hearkned unto me, and* Israel *had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned*

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my hand againſt their Adverſaries. Jer. 13. 27. *O* Iſrael! *Wilt thou not be made clean? When ſhall it once be?* And to name but one Text more, when our bleſſed Saviour wept over *Jeruſalem*, how paſſionately does he wiſh, that *She had known in that her day, the things which belonged to her Peace!* Ser. 14.

And if after all this, we can doubt whether the faithful God means as he ſays, he hath for our farther aſſurance, and to put the matter out of all doubt, confirmed his word by an Oath, *Ezek.* 33. 11. *As I live, ſaith the Lord God, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his ways and live. Turn ye, turn ye, from your evils ways; for why will ye die, O Houſe of* Iſrael? So that if words can be any Declaration of a hearty and ſincere deſire, we have no Reaſon to doubt, but that God does really deſire the Happineſs of men, and would gladly prevent their Ruin and Deſtruction.

If any now ask, why then are not all men Happy? Why do they not eſcape Ruin and Deſtruction? And particularly why the People of *Iſrael*, for whom God here makes this wiſh, did not eſcape thoſe Judgments which

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were threatned; the Prophet shall answer for me, *Hos.* 13. 9. *O* Israel! *thou hast destroyed thy self.* And *David*, Psal. 81. 11. *My people would not hearken to my voice*, Israel *would none of me.* And our Blessed Saviour, *Matth.* 23. 37. *How often would I have gathered thee, as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings, and ye would not!* And *John* 5. 40. *Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life.* You see what account the Scripture plainly gives of this matter; it rests upon the wills of men, and God hath not thought fit to force Happiness upon men, and to make them wise and good whether they will or no. He presents men with such Motives, and offers such Arguments to their Consideration, as are fit to prevail with reasonable men, and is ready to afford them all necessary assistance, if they be not wanting to themselves: but if they will not *be wise* and *consideder*, if they will stand out against all the Arguments that God can offer, if they will *receive the grace of God in vain*, and *resist his blessed Sprit*, and *reject the counsel of God against themselves*, God hath not in this Case engaged himself to provide any remedy against the obstinacy

ſtinacy and perverſeneſs of men, but *their Deſtruction is of themſelves*, and *their blood ſhall be upon their own Heads.* And there is no nicety and intricacy in this matter; but if men will conſider Scripture and Reaſon impartially, they will find this to be the plain Reſolution of the Caſe. Ser. 14.

So that no Man hath Reaſon to charge either his Fault, or his Puniſhment upon God; he is *free from the Blood of all Men*; he ſincerely deſires our Happineſs: but we wilfully ruin our ſelves; and when he tells us, that *He deſires not the death of a ſinner, but rather that he ſhould turn from his wickedneſs and live*; that *He would have all men to be ſaved, and to come to the know of the truth*, that *He is not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to Repentance*, he plainly means as he ſays, and doth not ſpeak to us with any reſerve or dark diſtinction between his *ſecret* and *revealed* Will, he does not decree one thing, and declare another.

And if this be ſo, no Man hath reaſon to be diſcouraged from attempting and endeavouring his own Happineſs, upon a jealouſie and ſurmiſe that God hath by any fatal decree put a Bar to it

Vol. 8. it from all eternity: for if he had absolutely resolved to make the greatest part of Mankind miserable, without any respect to their Actions in this World, he would never have said, that *He desires that all should be saved*; he would not have exhorted all men *to work out their own Salvation*; had he taken up any such Resolution, he would have declared it to all the World: for he hath Power enough in his Hands, *to do what he pleaseth, and none can resist his Will*; so that he did not need to have dissembled the matter, and to have pretended a desire to save men, when de was resolved to ruin them.

This is the *First*, that God doth really and heartily desire the Happiness of men, and to prevent their Misery and Ruin. I proceed to the

II. That it is a great part of wisdom to consider seriously the last Issue and Consequence of our Actions, and whither the Course of Life which we lead does tend, and what will follow upon it. And therefore *Wisdom* is here explained by *Consideration*, *O that they were wise, that they would consider their latter end*! that is, what will befal them hereafter,

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after, what will be the Issue and Consequence of all the Sins and Provocations which they are guilty of. Ser. 14.

And this is a principal Point and Property of wisdom, to look forward, and not only to consider the present Pleasure and Advantage of any Action, but the future Consequence of it: and there is no greater Agument of an imprudent Man, than to gratifie himself for the present in the doing of a thing, which will turn to his greater prejudice afterwards; especially if the future Inconvenience be great and intolerable, as it is in the Case we are speaking of. For eternal Happiness or Misery depends upon the Actions of this present Life, and according as we behave our selves in this World, it will go well or ill with us for ever; so that this is a matter of vast importance, and deserves our most serious thoughts; and in matters of mighty consequence, a wise Man will take all things into Consideration, and look before him as far as he can. And indeed this is the Reason why things of great moment are said to be things of Consequence, because great things depend and are likely to follow upon them: and then surely

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surely that is the greatest concernment, upon which not only the Happiness of this present Life, but our Happiness to all eternity does depend; and if the good and bad Actions of this Life be of that consequence to us, it is fit every Man should consider what he does, and whither the Course of Life he is engaged or about to engage in, will lead him at last. For this is true wisdom, to look to the end of things, and to think seriously before hand, what is likely to be the event of such an Action, of such a Course of Life: if we serve God faithfully and do his Will, what will be the consequence of that to us in this World, and the other: and on the other hand, if we live wickedly, and allow our selves in any unlawful and vicious Practice, what will be the end of that Course.

And to any Man that consults the Law of his own Nature, or the will of God revealed in Scripture, nothing can be plainer than what will be the end of these several ways. God hath plainly told us, and our own Consciences will tell us the same, that *If we do well, we shall be accepted* of God, and rewarded by him: but if we do ill,

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the end of theſe things is Death; that *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh* Ser. 14. *will be upon every ſoul of Man that doth evil*; *but honour and glory and peace to every Man that doth good, in the day when God ſhall judge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Chriſt, according to the Goſpel.*

So that God hath given us a plain proſpect of the different Iſſues of a virtuous and a wicked Life, and there wants nothing but Conſideration to make us to attend to theſe things, and to lay them ſeriouſly to heart. For while men are inconſiderate, they go on ſtupidly in an evil way, and are not ſenſible of the danger of their preſent Courſe, becauſe they do not attend to the conſequence of it: but when their Eyes are once opened by Conſideration, they cannot but be ſadly apprehenſive of the miſchief they are running themſelves upon. If men would take but a ſerious and impartial view of their Lives and Actions, if they would conſider the tendency of a ſinful Courſe, and whither it will bring them at laſt; if the vicious and diſſolute Man would but look about him, and conſider how many have been ruined in that very way that he is in, how

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Vol. 8. how many lie *slain and wounded in it*; that *it is the way to Hell, and leads down to the Chambers of Death*; the serious thought of this could not but check him in his Course, and make him resolve upon a better Life. If men were wise, they would consider the consequence of their Actions, and upon Consideration would resolve upon that which they are convinc'd is best. I proceed to the

III. Thing I propounded, which was, that Consideration of the consequence of our Actions, is an excellent means to prevent the mischiefs, which otherwise we should run into. And this is necessarily implyed in the wish here in the Text, that if we would but consider these things, they might be prevented. For how can any Man, who hath any love or regard for himself, any tenderness for his own Interest and Happiness, see Hell and Destruction before him, which, if he hold on in his evil Course, will certainly swallow him up, and yet venture to go on in his Sins? Can any Man that plainly beholds Misery hastning towards him *like an armed Man*, and *Destruction coming upon him as a whirlwind*,

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wind, think himſelf unconcerned to prevent it and flie from it? The moſt dull and ſtupid Creatures will ſtart back upon the ſight of preſent danger. *Balaam*'s Aſs, when ſhe ſaw the Angel of the Lord ſtanding in the way, with his Sword drawn ready to ſmite her, ſtarts aſide, and could not be urged on. Now God hath given us, not only Senſe to apprehend a preſent evil, but Reaſon and Conſideration to look before us, and to diſcover dangers at a diſtance, to apprehend them as certainly, and with as clear a Conviction of the reality of them, as if they threatned us the next moment: and will any conſiderate Man, who hath calculated the dangerous events of Sin, and the dreadful effects of God's wrath upon ſinners, go on to *provoke the Lord to jealouſie, as if he were ſtronger than he?* It is not to be imagined, but that if men would ſeriouſly conſider what Sin is, and what ſhall be the ſad Portion of ſinners hereafter, they would reſolve upon a better Courſe. Would any Man live in the Luſts of the fleſh and of intemperance, or out of Covetouſneſs defraud or oppreſs his Neighbour, did he ſeriouſly conſider, that Ser. 14.

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Vol. 8. that *God is the avenger of such*; and that *because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the Children of disobedience.*

I should have great hopes of mens Repentance and Reformation, if they could but once be brought to Consideration: for in most men it is not so much a positive disbelief of the Truth, as inadvertency and want of Consideration, that makes them to go on so securely in a sinful Course. Would but men consider what Sin *is*, and what will be the fearful consequence of it, probably in this World, but most certainly in the other, they could not chuse but flie from it as the greatest evil in the World.

And to shew what Power and Influence Consideration will probably have to bring men to Repentance, and a change of their Lives, I remember to have some where met with a very remarkable story, of one that had a Son that took bad Courses, and would not be reclaimed by all the good Counsel his Father could give him; at last coming to his Father, who lay upon his Death-Bed, to beg his Blessing, his Father instead of

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of upbraiding him with his bad Life and undutiful Carriage toward him, ſpake kindly to him, and told him he had but one thing to deſire of him, That every day he would retire and ſpend one quarter of an hour alone by himſelf; which he promiſed his Father faithfully to do, and made it good: after a while it grew tedious to him, to ſpend even ſo little time in ſuch bad and uneaſie Company, and he began to bethink himſelf, for what Reaſon his Father ſhould ſo earneſtly deſire of him to do ſo odd a thing for his ſake, and his mind preſently ſuggeſted to him, that it was to enforce him to Conſideration; wiſely judging that if by any means he could but bring him to that, he would ſoon reform his Life and become a new Man. And the thing had its deſired effect; for after a very little Conſideration, he took up a firm Reſolution to change the Courſe of his Life, and was true to it all his days. I cannot anſwer for the truth of the Story, but for the Moral of it I will; namely, that Conſideration is one of the beſt and moſt likely means in the World, to bring a bad Man to a better Mind. I now come to the

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IV. And laſt particular, namely, that the want of this Conſideration is one of the greateſt Cauſes of mens Ruin. And this likewiſe is implyed in the Text; and the Reaſon why God does ſo vehemently deſire that men would be wiſe and conſider, is becauſe ſo many are ruin'd and undone for want of it. This is the deſperate folly of Mankind, that they ſeldom think ſeriouſly of the Conſequence of their Actions, and leaſt of all of ſuch as are of greateſt Concernment to them, and have the chief influence upon their eternal Condition. They do not conſider what Miſchief and Inconvenience a wicked Life may plunge them into in this World, what Trouble and Diſturbance it may give them when they come to die, what Horror and Confuſion it may fill them withal when they are leaving this World, and paſſing into Eternity, and what intolerable Miſery and Torment it may bring upon them to all Eternity. Did men ponder and lay to heart Death and Judgment, Heaven and Hell, and would they but let their thoughts dwell upon theſe things, it is not credible that the generality of men could lead ſuch profane

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profane and impious, ſuch lewd and diſſolute, ſuch ſecure and careleſs Lives as they do. Ser. 14.

Would but a Man frequently entertain his Mind with ſuch thoughts as theſe; I muſt ſhortly die and leave this World, and then all the Pleaſures and Enjoyments of it will be to me as if they had never been, only that the remembrance of them, and the ill uſe I have made of them, will be very bitter and grievous to me; after all Death will tranſmit me out of this World, into a quite different State and Scene of things, into the preſence of that great and terrible, that inflexible and impartial Judge, who will *render to every Man according to his works*, and then all the evils which I have done in this Life, will riſe up in Judgment againſt me, and fill me with everlaſting Confuſion, in that great aſſembly of Men and Angels, will baniſh me from the preſence of God, and all the Happineſs which flows from it, and procure a dreadful ſentence of unſpeakable Miſery and Torment to be paſt upon me, which I can never get reverſt, nor yet ever be able to ſtand under the weight of it: if men would but enter

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into the ſerious Conſideration of theſe things, and purſue theſe thoughts to ſome Iſſue and Concluſion, they would take up other Reſolutions; and I verily believe, that the want of this hath ruin'd more than even infidelity it ſelf. And this I take to be the meaning of that queſtion in the *Pſalmiſt*, *Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?* that is, *no Conſideration*; intimating that if they had, they would do better.

All that now remains, is to perſwade men to apply their hearts to this piece of wiſdom, to look before them, and to think ſeriouſly of the Conſequence of their Actions, what will be the final Iſſue of that Courſe of Life they are engaged in; and if they continue in it, what will become of them hereafter, what will become of them for ever.

And here I might apply this Text, as God here does to the People of *Iſrael*, to the publick Condition of this Nation, which is not ſo very unlike to that of the People of *Iſrael*: for God ſeems to have choſen this Nation for his more peculiar People, and hath exerciſed a very particular Providence towards

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towards us, in conducting us through that Wilderneſs of Confuſion, in which we have been wandring for the ſpace of above forty years, and when things were come to the laſt extremity, and we ſeemed to ſtand upon the very brink of Ruin, *Then* (as it is ſaid of the People of *Iſrael*, ver. 36. of this Chapter) *God repented himſelf for his ſervants, when he ſaw that their Power was gone*, that is, that they were utterly unable to help themſelves, and to work their own deliverance. And it may be ſaid of us, as *Moſes* does of that People, *Chap.* 33. 29. *Happy art thou, O* Iſrael, *O people ſaved by the Lord, the ſhield of thy help, and who is the Sword of thy excellency!* Never did any Nation ſtruggle with, and get through ſo many and ſo great difficulties, as we have ſeveral times done. Ser. 14.

And I fear we have behaved our ſelves toward God, not much better than the People of *Iſrael* did, but like *Jeſurun*, after many deliverances and great mercies, *have waxed fat and kicked, have forſaken the God that made us, and little eſteemed the Rock of our Salvation*, by which we have *provoked the Lord to jealouſie*, and have as it were

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Vol. 8. forc'd him to multiply his Judgments, and to ſpend his arrows upon us, and *to hide his face from us, to ſee what our end will be*; ſo that we have Reaſon to fear, that God would have brought utter Ruin and Deſtruction upon us, and *ſcatter'd us into corners*, and *made the remembrance of us to have ceaſed from among men, had he not feared the wrath of the enemy, and leſt the adverſaries ſhould have behaved themſelves ſtrangely, and leſt they ſhould ſay Our hand is high, and the Lord hath not done all this*; that is, leſt they ſhould aſcribe this juſt vengeance of God upon a ſinful and unthankful Nation, to the goodneſs and righteouſneſs of their own Cauſe, and to the favour and aſſiſtance of the Idols and falſe Gods whom they worſhip'd, to the Patronage and Aid of the Virgin *Mary* and the Saints, to whom, contrary to the Will and Command of the true God, they had offer'd up ſo many Prayers and Vows, and paid the greateſt part of their Religious worſhip: but *the Lord hath ſhewn himſelf greater than all Gods, and in the things wherein they dealt proudly, that he is above them: for our Rock is not as their Rock,*

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Rock, even our enemies themſelves being Judges. Ser. 14.

And we have been too like the People of *Iſrael* in other reſpects alſo, ſo fickle and inconſtant, that after great deliverances we are apt preſently to murmur and be diſcontented, to grow ſick of our own Happineſs, and *to turn back in our hearts into* Egypt; ſo that God may complain of us, as he does of his People *Iſrael*, that nothing that he could do, would bring them to Conſideration and make them better, neither his mercies nor his Judgments. *Iſa.* 1. 2, 3. *Hear, O Heavens! and give ear, O Earth! For the Lord hath ſpoken; I have nouriſhed and brought up Children, but they have rebelled againſt me. The Ox knoweth his owner, and the Aſs his Maſters Crib: but* Iſrael *doth not know, my People doth not conſider.* And ſo likewiſe he complains, that his Judgments had no effect upon them, *ver.* 5. *Why ſhould ye be ſmitten any more? Ye will revolt more and more.* Well therefore may it be ſaid of us, as it was of them in the Verſe before the Text, *They are a Nation void of knowledge, neither is there any underſtanding in them.* And the wiſh that follows in

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Vol. 8. the Text, is as ſeaſonable for us as it was for them, *O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this, that they would conſider their latter end!*

And by parity of Reaſon, this may likewiſe be applyed to particular Perſons, and to perſwade every one of us to a ſerious Conſideration, of the final Iſſue and Conſequence of our Actions. I will only offer theſe *two* Arguments.

I. That Conſideration is the proper Act of reaſonable Creatures, and that whereby we ſhew our ſelves men. So the Prophet intimates, *Iſa.* 46. 8. *Remember this, and ſhew your ſelves men; bring it again to mind, O ye tranſgreſſors!* that is, conſider it well, think of it again and again, ye that run on ſo furiouſly in a ſinful Courſe, what the end and iſſue of theſe things will be. If ye do not do this, you do not *ſhew your ſelves men*, you do not act like reaſonable Creatures, to whom it is peculiar to propoſe to themſelves ſome end and deſign of their Actions; but rather like *Brute Creatures, which have no underſtanding*, and act only by a natural inſtinct, without any Conſideration of the end of their Actions, or of the means conducing to it.

II. Whether

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II. Whether we conſider it or not, our latter end will come; and all thoſe diſmal Conſequences of a ſinful Courſe, which God hath ſo plainly threatned, and our own Conſciences do ſo much dread, will certainly overtake us at laſt; and we cannot, by not thinking of theſe things, ever prevent or avoid them. Death will come, and after that the Judgment, and an irreverſible Doom will paſs upon us, according to all the evil that we have done, and all the good that we have neglected to do in this Life, under the heavy weight and preſſure whereof we muſt lie groaning, and bewailing our ſelves to everlaſting Ages. Ser. 14.

God now exerciſeth his Mercy and Patience and Long-ſuffering toward us, in expectation of our amendment; he reprieves us on purpoſe that we may repent, and in hopes that we will at laſt conſider and grow wiſer; for *he is not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to Repentance*: but if we will trifle away this day of God's Grace and Patience, if we will not conſider and bethink our ſelves, there is another day that will certainly come, *That great and terrible Day of the*

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the Lord, in which the Heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, and the Elements ſhall melt with fervent heat, the Earth alſo and the works that are therein ſhall be burnt up.

Seeing then all theſe things ſhall be, let us conſider ſeriouſly *what manner of Perſons we ought to be in all holy Converſation and Godlineſs, waiting for and haſtning unto the coming of the Day of God. To whom be glory now and for ever.*

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SERMON XV.

The Danger of Impenitence, where the Goſpel is preach'd.

MATTH. XI. 21, 22.

Woe unto thee Chorazin, woe unto thee Bethſaida: for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in ſackcloth and aſhes. But I ſay unto you, It ſhall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of Judgment, than for you.

AFter our Bleſſed Saviour had inſtructed, and ſent forth his Diſciples, he himſelf went abroad to preach unto the Cities of *Iſrael*; particularly he ſpent much time in the Cities

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Cities of *Galilee*, *Chorazin*, and *Bethſaida*, and *Capernaum*, Preaching the Goſpel to them, and working many and great Miracles among them; but with little or no ſucceſs, which was the cauſe of his denouncing this terrible woe againſt them, *ver.* 20. *Then began he to upbraid the Cities, wherein moſt of his mighty works were done, becauſe they repented not. Woe unto thee Chorazin,* &c.

In which words our Saviour declares the ſad and miſerable Condition of thoſe two Cities, *Chorazin* and *Bethſaida*, which had neglected ſuch an opportunity, and reſiſted and withſtood ſuch means of Repentance, as would have effectually reclaimed the moſt wicked Cities and People that can be inſtanced in in any Age, *Tyre* and *Sidon* and *Sodom*; and therefore he tells them, that their Condition was much worſe, and that they ſhould fall under a heavier Sentence at the day of Judgment, than the People of thoſe Cities, whom they had always lookt upon as the greateſt ſinners that ever were in the World. This is the plain meaning of the words in general; but yet there are ſome difficulties in them, which

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which I shall endeavour to clear, and then proceed to raise such Observations from them, as may be instructive and useful to us. Ser. 15.

The Difficulties are these.

I. What Repentance is here spoken of; whether an external Repentance in shew and appearance only, or an inward and real and sincere Repentance.

II. In what Sense it is said, that *Tyre and Sidon would have repented.*

III. What is meant by their *would have repented long ago.*

IV. How this assertion of our Saviour's, that Miracles would have converted *Tyre* and *Sidon*, is reconcileable with that other saying of his, *Luke* 16. 31. in the Parable of the rich Man and *Lazarus*, that *those who believed not* Moses *and the Prophets, neither would they be perswaded, tho' one rose from the dead.*

I. What Repentance is here spoken of; whether a meer external and Hypocritical Repentance in shew and appearance only, or an inward and real and sincere Repentance.

The Reason of this doubt depends upon the different Theories of Divines,

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Vol. 8. vines, about the sufficiency of Grace accompanying the outward Means of Repentance, and whether an irresistible degree of God's Grace be necessary to Repentance: for they who deny sufficient Grace to accompany the outward Means of Repentance, and assert an irresistible degree of God's Grace necessary to Repentance, are forced to say, that our Saviour here speaks of a meer External Repentance: because if he spake of an inward and sincere Repentance, then it must be granted, that sufficient inward grace did accompany the Miracles that were wrought in *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*, to bring men to Repentance; because what was afforded to them, would have brought *Tyre* and *Sidon* to Repentance. And that which would have effected a thing, cannot be denyed to be sufficient; so that unless our Saviour here speaks of a meer External Repentance, either the outward Means of Repentance, as Preaching and Miracles, must be granted to be sufficient to bring men to Repentance, without the inward Operation of God's Grace upon the Minds of Men; or else a sufficient degree of God's Grace

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Grace must be acknowledged to accompany the outward Means of Repentance. Again, if an irresistible degree of Grace be necessary to true Repentance, it is plain, *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida* had it not, because they did not repent; and yet without this *Tyre* and *Sidon* could not have sincerely repented; therefore our Saviour here must speak of a meer External Repentance. Thus some argue, as they do likewise concerning the Repentance of *Nineveh*, making that also to be meerly External, because they are loath to allow true Repentance to Heathens. Ser. 15.

But it seems very plain, that our Saviour does speak of an inward and true and sincere Repentance; and therefore the Doctrines that will not admit this, are not true. For our Saviour speaks of the same kind of Repentance, that he upbraided them with the want of in the verse before the Text. *Then began he to upbraid the Cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not*, that is because they were not brought to a sincere Repentance by his Preaching, which was confirmed by such great

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great Miracles. 'Tis true indeed, he mentions the outward ſigns and expreſſions of Repentance, when he ſays *They would have repented in ſackcloth and aſhes*; but not as excluding inward and real Repentance, but ſuppoſing it, as is evident from what is ſaid in the next Verſe, *It ſhall be more tolerable for* Tyre *and* Sidon *at the day of Judgment, than for you:* for tho' an external and hypocritical Repentance, may prevail with God to put off temporal Judgments, yet ſurely it will be but a very ſmall, if any mitigation of our Condemnation at the day of Judgment: ſo that the Repentance here ſpoken of cannot, without great violence to the ſcope and deſign of our Saviour's Argument, be underſtood only of an external ſhew and appearance of Repentance.

II. The next difficulty to be cleared, is, in what Senſe it is here ſaid, that *if the mighty works which were done* by our Saviour among the *Jews, had been done in* Tyre *and* Sidon, *they would have repented.*

Some to avoid the inconvenience which they apprehend to be in the more

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more ſtrict and literal Senſe of the words, look upon them as Hyperbolical, as we ſay *Such a thing would move a Stone*, or the like, when we would expreſs ſomething to be very ſad and grievous; ſo here to aggravate the Impenitence of the *Jews*, our Saviour ſays, that they reſiſted thoſe Means of Repentance, which one would think ſhould almoſt have prevailed upon the greateſt and moſt obdurate Sinners that ever were; but not intending to affirm any ſuch thing. Ser. 15.

But there is no colour for this, if we conſider that our Saviour Reaſons from the Suppoſition of ſuch a thing, that therefore the Caſe of *Tyre* and *Sidon* would really be *more tolerable at the day of Judgment than theirs*; becauſe *they would have repented*, but the *Jews* did not.

Others perhaps underſtand the words too ſtrictly, as if our Saviour had ſpoken according to what he certainly foreknew would have happened to the People of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, if ſuch Miracles had been wrought among them. And no doubt but in that Caſe God did certainly

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know what they would have done: but yet I ſhould rather chuſe to underſtand the words as ſpoken popularly, according to what in all humane appearance and probability would have hapned, if ſuch External Means of Repentance, accompanied with an ordinary Grace of God, had been afforded to them of *Tyre* and *Sidon*. And thus the old *Latine* Interpreter ſeems to have underſtood the next words, *If the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in* Sodom, ἔμειναν ἄν, *forte manſiſſent, it would perhaps have remained to this day, in all likelyhood it had continued till now.* Much the ſame with that paſſage of the Prophet, *Ezek.* 3. 5, 6. *Thou art not ſent to a People of a ſtrange Speech, and of a hard Language, but to the Houſe of* Iſrael: *Surely, had I ſent thee to them, they would have hearkned unto thee,* that is, in all probability they would, there is little doubt to be made of the contrary. And this is ſufficient Foundation for our Saviour's reaſoning afterwards, that *it ſhall be more tolerable for* Tyre *and* Sidon *in the day of Judgment than for them.* And if we may

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may judge what they would have done before, by what they did afterwards, there is more than probability for it: for we read in the 21*st* Chapter of the *Acts*, ver. 3. and ver. 27. that the Inhabitants of *Tyre* and *Sidon* receiv'd the Gospel, and kindly entertain'd St. *Paul*, when the *Jews* rejected them both. The

Ser. 15.

III. Thing to be cleared, is, What is meant by *long ago*; *They would have repented long ago.*

Some understand this, as if our Saviour had said, they would not have stood out so long against so much Preaching and so many Miracles, but would at first have repented, long before our Saviour gave over *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*, for obstinate and incorrigible Sinners; they would not only have repented at last, but much sooner and without so much ado.

But this does not seem to be the meaning of the words; but our Saviour seems to refer to those ancient Times *long ago*, when the Prophets denounced Judgments against *Tyre* and *Sidon*, particularly the Prophet *Ezekiel*, and to say, that if in those days the Preaching of that Prophet had been accompanied with such Miracles as

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Vol. 8. our Saviour wrought in the Cities of *Galilee*, *Tyre* and *Sidon* would in those days have repented.

The *last* and greatest difficulty of all is, How this assertion of our Saviour, that Miracles would have converted *Tyre* and *Sidon*, is reconcileable with that Discourse of our Saviour's, *Luke* 16. in the Parable of the rich Man and *Lazarus*, that *Those who would not believe* Moses *and the Prophets, would not have been perswaded, tho' one* had *rose from the dead.*

The true answer to which difficulty in short is this; That when our Saviour says, *If they believe not* Moses *and the Prophets, neither will they be perswaded, tho' one rose from the dead*, he does not hereby weaken the force of Miracles, or their aptness to convince men and bring them to Repentance, but rather confirm it; because *Moses and the Prophets* had the attestation of many and great Miracles, and therefore there was no Reason to think, that they who would not believe the Writings and Doctrine of *Moses* and *the Prophets*, which had the Confirmation of so many Miracles, and was owned by themselves

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to have ſo, ſhould be wrought upon by one particular Miracle, *The coming of one from the dead, and ſpeaking unto them*: or however this might move and aſtoniſh them for the preſent, yet it was not likely that the Grace of God ſhould concur with ſuch an extraordinary Means, to render it effectual to their Converſion and Repentance, who had wilfully deſpiſed and obſtinately rejected that which had a much greater Confirmation, than the Diſcourſe of a Man riſen from the dead, and was appointed by God for the ordinary and ſtanding Means of bringing men to Repentance. So that our Saviour might with Reaſon enough pronounce that *Tyre and Sidon*, who never had a ſtanding Revelation of God to bring them to Repentance, nor had rejected it, would upon Miracles extraordinarily wrought among them have Repented; and yet deny it elſewhere to be likely, that they who rejected a ſtanding Revelation of God confirmed by Miracles, which call'd them to Repentance, would probably be brought to Repentance by a particular Miracle; or that God ſhould Ser. 15.

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afford his Grace to make it effectual for their Repentance and Salvation.

The words being thus cleared, I come now to raiſe ſuch Obſervations from them, as may be inſtructive and uſeful to us.

I. I obſerve from this Diſcourſe of our Saviour, that Miracles are of great force and efficacy to bring men to Repentance.

This our Saviour's Diſcourſe here ſuppoſeth; otherwiſe their Impenitence had not been ſo Criminal and Inexcuſable upon that account, *That ſuch mighty works had been done among them*, as would probably have prevailed upon ſome of the worſt People that had been in the World; for ſuch were the Inhabitants of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, guilty of great Covetouſneſs and Fraud, Pride and Luxury, the uſual Sins of Places of great Traffick and Commerce; and ſuch to be ſure was *Sodom*; and yet our Saviour tells us, that the Miracles which he had wrought in the Cities of *Iſrael*, would in all probability have brought thoſe great Sinners to Repentance; namely, by bringing them to Faith, and convincing them of

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of the Truth and Divinity of that Doctrine, which he preached unto them, and which contains such powerful Arguments to Repentance and Amendment of Life. Ser. 15.

II. I observe likewise from our Saviour's Discourse, that God is not always obliged to work Miracles for the Conversion of Sinners. It is great goodness in him to afford sufficient Means of Repentance to men, as he did to *Tyre* and *Sidon*, in calling them to Repentance by his Prophet; tho' such Miracles were not wrought among them, as God thought fit to accompany our Saviour's Preaching withal.

This I observe, to prevent a kind of bold and saucy Objection, which some would perhaps be apt to make; If *Tyre* and *Sidon* would have Repented, had such Miracles been wrought among them, as our Saviour wrought in *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*, why were they not wrought, that they might have Repented? To which it is sufficient Answer to say, That God is not obliged to do all that is possible to be done, to reclaim men from their Sins; he is not obliged to over-

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power their Wills, and to work irresistibly upon their Minds, which he can easily do; he is not obliged to work Miracles for every particular Man's Conviction; nor where he vouchsafeth to do this, is he obliged always to work the greatest and most convincing Miracles; his Goodness will not suffer him to omit what is necessary and sufficient to bring men to Repentance and Happiness, nay beyond this he many times does more; but it is sufficient to vindicate the Justice and Goodness of God, *that* he is not wanting to us, in affording the Means necessary to reclaim us from our Sins, and to bring us to goodness. That which is properly our part, is to make use of those Means which God affords us to become better, and not to prescribe to him how much he should do for us; to be thankful that he hath done so much, and not to find fault with him for having done no more.

III. I observe farther from our Saviour's Discourse, That the External Means of Repentance which God affords to men, do suppose an Inward Grace of God accompanying them, sufficiently

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sufficiently enabling men to repent, if it be not their own fault; I say a sufficient Grace of God accompanying the outward Means of Repentance, till by our wilful and obstinate neglect and resistance and opposition of this Grace, we provoke God to withdraw it from the Means, or else to withdraw both the Grace and the Means from us: otherwise Impenitence after such external Means afforded, would be no new and special fault. For if the concurrence of God's Grace with the outward Means be necessary to work Repentance, then the Impenitence of those to whom this Grace is not afforded, which yet is necessary to Repentance, is neither any new Sin, nor any new Aggravation of their former Impenitence. For no Man can imagine that the just God will charge men with new guilt, and increase their Condemnation, for remaining impenitent in such Circumstances, in which it is impossible for them to repent. Ser. 15.

IV. I observe from this Discourse of our Saviour's, That an Irresistible degree of Grace is not necessary to Repentance, nor commonly afforded

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forded to thoſe who do repent. God may where he pleaſeth, without injury to any Man, over-power his Will, and ſtop him in his Courſe, and hinder him from making himſelf miſerable, and by an Irreſiſtible Light convince him of his Error and the Evil of his ways, and bring him to a better Mind: but this God ſeldom does; and when he does it, it is very probable it is not ſo much for their own ſakes, as to make them Inſtruments of good to others. Thus by a ſecret but over-powering influence he over-ruled the Diſciples to follow our Saviour, and to leave their Callings and Relations, and all their temporal Concernments to do it. But one of the moſt remarkable Examples of this extraordinary Grace of God, is St. *Paul*, who was violently ſtopt in his Courſe of perſecuting the Chriſtians, and convinc'd of his Sin, and brought over to Chriſtianity, in a very extraordinary and forcible manner. And of this miraculous and extraordinary Converſion, God himſelf gives this account, *That he was a choſen Veſſel unto him, to bear his name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and*

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and the Children of Iſrael, Acts 9. 15. And St. *Paul* tells us, *Gal.* 1. 15, 16. *That for this end God had ſeparated him from his Mother's womb, and call'd him by his Grace, and revealed his Son to him* in that extraordinary manner, *that he might preach him among the Heathen.* Ser. 15.

But generally God does not bring men thus to Repentance; nor is it neceſſary he ſhould. For if an irreſiſtible degree of Grace were always neceſſary to bring men to Repentance, there could be no difference between the Impenitence of *Chorazin* and *Bethſaida*, and of *Tyre* and *Sidon.* For according to this Doctrine of the Neceſſity of Irreſiſtible Grace to the Converſion of every Man, it is evident, that *Tyre* and *Sidon* neither could, nor would have repented, without an irreſiſtible degree of God's Grace accompanying the outward Means of Repentance which he afforded to them; becauſe ſuch a degree of Grace is neceſſary to Repentance, and without it, it is impoſſible for any Man to repent. But then it is as plain on the contrary, that if *Chorazin* and *Bethſaida* had

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had the ſame irreſiſtible degree of God's Grace, together with the outward Means of Repentance afforded to them, that they would have repented as certainly as *Tyre* and *Sidon*. Where then is the Reaſon of upbraiding the Impenitence of the one, more than of the other? Where the Aggravation of the one's Guilt above the other? Where the Juſtice of puniſhing the Impenitence of *Chorazin* and *Bethſaida*, more than theirs of *Tyre* and *Sidon*? For upon this ſuppoſition, they muſt either have repented *both* alike, or have been both equally Impenitent. The ſum of what I have ſaid is this, That if no Man does, nor can repent, without ſuch a degree of God's Grace as cannot be reſiſted, no Man's Repentance is commendable, nor is one Man's Impenitence more blameable than anothers; *Chorazin* and *Bethſaida* can be in no more fault for continuing Impenitent, than *Tyre* and *Sidon* were. For either this irreſiſtible Grace is afforded to men or not: if it be, their Repentance is neceſſary, and they cannot help it; if it be not, their Repentance is impoſſible, and conſequently their

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their Impenitence is necessary, and they cannot help it neither. Ser. 15.

V. I observe from the main scope of our Saviour's Discourse, That the Sins and Impenitence of men receive their Aggravation, and consequently shall have their Punishment, proportionable to the Opportunities and Means of Repentance, which those Persons have enjoyed and neglected.

For what is here said of Miracles, is by equality of Reason likewise true of all other Advantages and Means of Repentance and Salvation. The Reason why Miracles will be such an Aggravation of the Condemdemnation of men is, because they are so proper and powerful a Means to convince men of the Truth and Divinity of that Doctrine which calls them to Repentance. So that all those Means which God affords to us, of the Knowledge of our Duty, of Conviction of the Evil and Danger of a sinful Course, are so many helps and Motives to Repentance, and consequently will prove so many Aggravations of our Sin and Punishment,

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VI. And *laſt* Obſervation, and which naturally follows from the former, is this, That the Caſe of thoſe who are impenitent under the Goſpel, is of all others the moſt dangerous, and their Damnation ſhall be heavieſt and moſt ſevere.

And this brings the Caſe of theſe Cities here in the Text home to our ſelves. For in truth there is no material difference between the Caſe of *Chorazin* and *Bethſaida* and *Capernaum*, and of our ſelves in this City and Nation, who enjoy the clear Light of the Goſpel, with all the freedom, and all the Advantages that any People ever did. The Mercies of God to this Nation have been very great, eſpecially in bringing us out of that darkneſs and ſuperſtition, which covered this Weſtern part of the World; in reſcuing us from that great Corruption and Degeneracy of the Chriſtian Religion which prevailed among us, by ſo early and ſo regular a Reformation; and in continuing ſo long this great Bleſſing to us.

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us. The Judgments of God have been likewise very great upon us for our Sins; *God hath manifested himself by terrible things in righteousness*; our Eyes have seen many and dismal Calamities in the space of a few years, which call lowdly upon us to repent and turn to God. God hath afforded us the most effectual Means of Repentance, and hath taken the most effectual Course of bringing us to it. And tho' our Blessed Saviour do not speak to us in Person, nor do we at this day see Miracles wrought among us, as the *Jews* did; yet we have the Doctrine which our Blessed Saviour preach'd, faithfully transmitted to us, and a credible Relation of the Miracles wrought for the Confirmation of that Doctrine, and many other Arguments to perswade us of the Truth of it, which those to whom our Saviour spake had not, nor could not then have, taken from the accomplishing of our Saviour's Predictions, after his Death; the speedy Propagation and wonderful success of this Doctrine in the World, by weak and inconsiderable Means, against all the Power and Opposition of the World; the Destruction Ser. 15.

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ſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and the Diſperſion of the *Jewiſh* Nation, according to our Saviour's Propheſie; beſides many more that might be mentioned. And which is a mighty Advantage to us, we are free from thoſe Prejudices againſt the Perſon of our Saviour and his Doctrine, which the *Jews*, by the reverence which they bore to their Rulers and Teachers, were generally poſſeſt withal; we are brought up in the belief of it, and have drunk it in by Education; and if we believe it, as we all profeſs to do, we *have all* the Obligation and all the Arguments to Repentance, which the *Jews* could poſſibly have from the Miracles which they ſaw; for they were Means of Repentance to them, no otherwiſe than as they brought them to the belief of our Saviour's Doctrine, which call'd them to Repentance.

So that if we continue impenitent, the ſame woe is denounced againſt us, that is againſt *Chorazin* and *Bethſaida*; and we may be ſaid with *Capernaum*, *to be lifted up to Heaven*, by the Enjoyment of the moſt excellent Means and Advantages of Salvation, that any People ever did, which if we neg-

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lect, and still continue wicked and impenitent under them, we may justly fear, that with them *we shall be thrown down to Hell*, and have our place in the lowest part of that dismal Dungeon, and in the very Centre of that fiery Furnace. Ser. 15.

Never was there greater cause to upbraid the impenitence of any People, than of us, considering the Means and Opportunities which we enjoy; and never had any greater reason to fear a severer Doom, than we have. Impenitence in a Heathen is a great Sin; else how should God judge the World? But God takes no notice of that, in comparison of the Impenitence of Christians, who enjoy the Gospel, and are convinced of the Truth, and upon the greatest reason in the World profess to believe it. We Christians have all the Obligations to Repentance, that Reason and Revelation, Nature and Grace can lay upon us. Art thou convinced that thou hast sinned, and done that which is contrary to thy Duty, and thereby provoked the Wrath of God, and incensed his Justice against thee? As thou art a Man, and upon the stock of Natural Principles, thou

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art obliged to Repentance. The same Light of Reason which discovers to thee the Errors of thy Life, and challengeth thee for thy Impiety and Intemperance, for thy Injustice and Oppression, for thy Pride and Passion; the same Natural Conscience, which accuseth thee of any Miscarriages, does oblige thee to be sorry for it, *to turn from thy evil ways*, and *to break off thy Sins by Repentance*. For nothing can be more unreasonable, than for a Man to know a fault, and yet not think himself bound *to be sorry* for it; to be convinced of the evil of his ways, and not to think himself obliged by that very Conviction, to turn from it and forsake it. If there be any such thing as a natural *Law written in Mens Hearts*, which the Apostle tells us the Heathens had, it is impossible to imagine, but that the Law which obligeth Men not to transgress, should oblige them to Repentance in case of Transgression. And this every Man in the World is bound to, tho' he had never seen the Bible, nor heard of the name of Christ. And the Revelation of the Gospel doth not supersede this Obligation, but

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but adds new Strength and Force to it; and by how much this Duty of Repentance is more clearly revealed by our Blessed Saviour in the Gospel, by how much the Arguments which the Gospel useth to persuade Men, and encourage them to Repentance, are greater and more powerful; by so much is the Impenitence of those who live under the Gospel the more inexcusable. Ser. 15.

Had we only some faint hopes of God's Mercy, a doubtful Opinion and weak Persuasion of the Rewards and Punishments of another World; yet we have a Law within us, which upon the probability of these Considerations would oblige us to Repentance. Indeed if Men were assur'd upon good grounds, that there would be no future Rewards and Punishments; then the sanction of the Law were gone, and it would lose its force and Obligation: or if we did despair of the Mercy of God, and had good Reason to think Repentance impossible, or that it would do us no good; in that case there would be no sufficient Motive and Argument to Repentance: for no Man can return to his

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Vol. 8. Duty, without returning to the love of God and Goodneſs; and no man can return to the love of God, who believes that he bears an implacable hatred againſt him, and is reſolved to make him miſerable for ever. During this Perſuaſion no Man can repent. And this ſeems to be the reaſon, why the Devils continue impenitent.

But the Heathens were not without hopes of God's Mercy, and upon thoſe ſmall hopes which they had they encouraged themſelves into Repentance; as you may ſee in the inſtance of *the Ninevites*, *Let them turn every one from his evil ways, and from the violence that is in his hands. Who can tell, if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we periſh not?* Jonah 3. 8, 9. But if we, who have the cleareſt Diſcoveries, and the higheſt Aſſurance of this, who profeſs to believe that God hath declared himſelf placable to all Mankind, that *he is in Chriſt reconciling the World to himſelf*, and that upon our Repentance *he will not impute our Sins to us*; if we, to whom *the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven, againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of Men*, and to whom *Life and Immortality*

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Immortality are brought to Light by the Gospel, if after all this, we still go on in any impenitent Course, what shall we be able to plead in excuse of our selves at that great day? *The men of* Nineveh *shall rise up in Judgment* against such an impenitent Generation, *and Condemn it; because they repented* upon the Terror of lighter threatnings, and upon the Encouragement of weaker hops. Ser. 15.

And therefore it concerns us, who call our selves Christians, and enjoy the clear Revelation of the Gospel, to look about us, and take heed how we continue in an Evil Course. For if we remain impenitent, after all the Arguments which the Gospel, superadded to the Light of Nature, affords to us to bring us to Repentance, it shall not only *be more tolerable for the men of* Nineveh, but *for* Tyre *and* Sidon, *for* Sodom *and* Gomorrah, the most wicked and impenitent Heathens, *at the day of Judgment, than for us.* For because we have stronger Arguments, and more powerful Encouragements to Repentance, than they had, if we do not repent, we shall meet with a heavier Doom, and a fiercer Dam-

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Damnation. The Heathen World had many excuſes to plead for themſelves, which we have not. *The times of that ignorance God winked at: but now commands all men every where to repent; becauſe he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the World in righteouſneſs, by that Man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead.*

FINIS.

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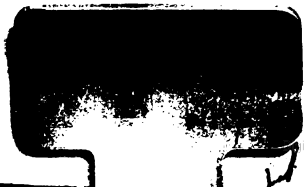
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